

# TROUT TALK

Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited



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

## President's Report...

**B**y now you should have received your invitation for the annual fundraising banquet to be held on Friday, March 24, 2006. In anticipation of the banquet, I thought it would be appropriate to identify a few projects that we have been pursuing and our funding is being spent. We have commissioned the preparation of a Forest Stewardship Plan for the SWMTU Dolan Property that, upon implementation, will benefit the fishery and make the property more of an environmental asset. The Plan sets forth approximately 25 recommendations for the Property, with costs ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$10,000 per recommendation. *(As a reminder, the Dolan Property is open to the public, and I strongly encourage everyone to visit it in the spring.)* We are in the process of identifying west Michigan's "Home Rivers" for purposes of prioritizing our efforts. We also have a clean up on the Rogue River planned for this spring. More details on the conservation projects will be provided at the banquet.

The upcoming banquet will feature a few exciting new changes. First, please note that an RSVP form was attached to the invitation. After the overwhelming number of attendees at the last dinner seminar, it is important that the RSVP be returned so that we can ensure service for the large turnout we are expecting this year. I would also like to direct your attention to the bottom of the RSVP form, which allows you to make a donation to SWMTU or the Schrems Scholarship Fund without attending the banquet.

Next, based on a large number of recommendations from the membership, we have significantly increased the number of rods and reels that will be raffled the night of the banquet. If you do not leave the banquet with a rod or reel, you are a very unlucky person. The doors open this year at 5:00 p.m. (dinner is at 7:00 p.m.) and the night will commence with a complimentary ale happy hour. Yes, you read that correctly – a complimentary happy hour!

I cannot stress enough how important this fundraising banquet is for SWMTU. Without your support, SWMTU has no voice in Michigan and is unable to conserve and protect your fishery. Please consider making a donation and I hope to see you on the river.

Eric Starck, *President*

**ANNUAL BANQUET**  
**SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN TROUT UNLIMITED**



**AUCTION & RAFFLE**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2006**  
*at the Hilton Hotel  
 on 28th and Patterson*

**>RESERVATIONS A MUST<**  
 616-752-8596

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

Leave Messages at:  
Voice Creel  
616-752-8596

E-mail: [wmtu@wmtu.org](mailto:wmtu@wmtu.org)  
Website: [www.wmtu.org](http://www.wmtu.org)

## Sign up for the SWMTU e-mail list

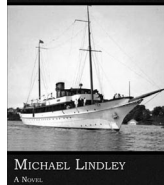
If you want e-mail notice of meetings, stream projects and other events that are important to SWMTU members, simply e-mail your address to [wmtu@wmtu.org](mailto:wmtu@wmtu.org).

Starting with this newsletter, we'll send an e-mail to members that allows them to download the newsletter. This means you get the newsletter even before the USPS gets its hands on it!

Previously, we used a system from Topica. That system is no longer in use. If you signed up via the Topica system, we already have your address. If you want to confirm that your e-mail is on the list, send us an e-mail and we'll check.

## West Michigan Trout Unlimited Author Pens Historical Novel of Charlevoix's Golden Age

THE SEASONS OF THE  
EMMALEE  
— a story of unexpected love, betrayal, murder and redemption —



*In The Seasons of the EmmaLee*, Grand Rapids author and WMTU member Michael Lindley, explores the deep and complex emotions of unexpected love, betrayal, murder and redemption as two families from different social classes find themselves tragically drawn together by the relationship of their son and daughter. The story is set in the idyllic resort community of Charlevoix, Michigan in the early 1940's, as well as present day.


Lindley's first novel takes the reader back in time to the small resort community of Charlevoix in the years before World War II. Emily Compton is a young woman of privilege whose family vacations in the exclusive summer resort. Her father owns the magnificent cruising yacht, the EmmaLee. Jonathan McKendry, son of a local boatyard owner, finds himself drawn into their world by his fascination with the ship and attraction to the Compton's daughter. A series of tragic events bring the two cultures crashing together while creating an even greater divide.

The story simultaneously tracks the meeting and relationship of two people decades later who are drawn together by the return of the EmmaLee to modern day Charlevoix. Sally Thomason, a descendant of the family that first owned the ship, struggles with overwhelming grief linked to her family's history. She meets Alex Clark, the new owner of the EmmaLee, and as their relationship grows they search for common ground to help each other move beyond the past to build new lives.

...continued on page 4

**SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN**

Environmentally Involved



Since 1962

**TROUT UNLIMITED**

## Committee Reports...

### CROTON DAM LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH CONSUMERS ENERGY

By Dick Smith

**Editor's Note:** The December 2005 edition of "Fly Fisherman" magazine published a letter to the editor from Richard Lemmerman of Fremont, Mich. that was entitled "Help the Muskegon."

In the letter, Mr. Lemmerman referenced how West Michigan Trout Unlimited was involved in the 1992 re-licensing agreement of Croton Dam on the Muskegon River to Consumers Energy.

Several members of the Chapter asked the Board to investigate the status of the agreement and this is what we found.

The new Consumers Energy dam licensing agreement was issued for 40 years and covers eleven dams. Six of them are on the Au Sable, two are on the Manistee, and three of them are on the Muskegon River. Most of these extracts are about how the agreement will affect the Muskegon River below Croton Dam.

Consumers Energy is responsible for fish protection, and for maintaining the quality of the water downstream from all of the dams. Consumers Energy is responsible for maintaining suitable water temperatures, and for the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water.

The three dams on the Muskegon River that are covered by the new license are Rogers, Hardy, and Croton.

It is commonly thought that those three dams are required to follow the rules called "run of the river." That means that the amount of water that is released at a dam is equal to the amount of water that comes into its impoundment. It means that they cannot run more water through the dam than is coming into the pond, and then hold water back to refill the pond. That is not entirely true.

Rogers Dam, which is the farthest upstream of the three dams on the Muskegon, is required to follow run of the river in its water releases.

Hardy Dam, the one just above Croton, is not required to do that. Hardy is allowed to run peak flows when it is necessary to do so. Then it can hold water back to refill the pond to its standard height of 822.5 feet above sea level. That level is 241 feet above the normal level of Lake Michigan. Hardy Dam can also run well above the run of the river flow to drop its pond as much as 12.5 feet to a winter level of about 810 feet above sea level. Then it can hold water back in the springtime to refill the pond.

Croton Dam is supposed to re-regulate the river by approximately equaling the flow of water into Rogers Pond, and the flow of water into Croton Pond from the Little Muskegon River. When Hardy Dam draws its pond down or refills it, Croton is expected to spill the amount of water equal to the discharge from Hardy Dam and the inflow from the Little Muskegon River.

Croton Dam is not supposed to warm the water it releases more than two degrees above the temperature of the water coming into Croton Pond. During the summer months of June, July, and August, a high average daily temperature of 68 degrees is allowed below Croton. A minimum dissolved oxygen level of seven milligrams per liter is required below Croton.

Consumers Energy is required to fund a study to determine whether it would be possible to send more cold water through the turbines during the summer to lower the average temperature of the water.

The company is also required to determine if the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water can be increased. It is not presently required to cool the water, or to increase the dissolved oxygen level, only to study those things to determine if it would be possible to do either one.

By the terms of the licensing agreement, Consumers Energy is required to provide \$570,000 a year for fish habitat restoration and fisheries management. Consumers Energy is also required to pay \$50 million over the term of the 40-year license to mitigate the environmental impacts of the eleven dams.

It also has to pay \$5 million for fish protection devices along the rivers, and \$1.75 million for water quality enhancement, and \$2.5 million for recreational facilities.

Consumers Energy is also required to study and design fish passage structures for possible implementation at Croton Dam, and it is required to plan to upgrade the vault toilets, parking lots, and boat launch ramps on all three rivers and their impoundments.

### Home Rivers Initiative

The Conservation Committee of Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited has been working hard over the past several months on a number of items. One of those items, our Home Rivers Initiative, has looked at identifying rivers within our West Michigan region to concentrate conservation and restoration efforts on. To that end I'm writing to solicit ideas from our members on potential projects. Who better to provide projects ideas for SWMTU than our members?

At the time of publishing of this newsletter our home rivers list has not yet been finalized, however, rivers like the Rogue River, Buck Creek, Sand Creek, Coldwater River, and the coldwater tributaries to the Grand River would certainly qualify for potential projects. Our goal is to complete projects on two of our "Home Rivers" each year.

Keep in mind the mission of Trout Unlimited: To Preserve, Protect, and Restore our Coldwater Fisheries. I've listed some "big picture" ideas below to jump start your thinking and to demonstrate what potential projects fulfill the mission of TU.

<i>Water Quality or Quantity</i>	<i>Erosion Control</i>
<i>Riparian or Buffer Zone Areas</i>	<i>Stream Restoration</i>
<i>Fish Habitat</i>	<i>Sampling and/or Monitoring</i>

This list is by no means all inclusive, I'm sure there are many more ideas that would qualify and we'd like to hear from you. Feel free to contact me, **Brad Boomstra**, at: [chromeangler@yahoo.com](mailto:chromeangler@yahoo.com) with any ideas that you may have. We are looking to implement a couple projects beginning this year.

## Hexes and Drakes!



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[www.shawnsmith.com](http://www.shawnsmith.com)



## 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!

## Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited Property Management Plan for the Dolan Natural Area January 3, 2006

Early in 2005, the board of Schrems WMTU commissioned Jack Boss of King and MacGregor Environmental, Inc. to complete a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) for our property on the Coldwater River. The FSP evaluates the existing conditions and proposes specific recommendations to enhance the property in line with our goals and objectives, as well as provides the owners with a wealth of additional information on improving the ecosystems on the property. Our stated goals are:

"To maximize plant and animal diversity; protect riparian and wetland areas; and enhance recreational and educational opportunities."

The FSP was completed in September, and the board has been studying the specific recommendations, evaluating the potential costs, and prioritizing the recommendations contained in the FSP. During the month of November, the board prioritized the project list and came up with the following plan:

### Top Priority Projects (should be completed within the next 3 years):

- Invasive Species Control (Unit E, Recommendation 17)
- Install 2 artificial wildlife/fish structures (Unit B, Recommendation 14-1)
- Install 7 artificial wildlife/fish structures (Unit A, Recommendation 13)
- Enlarge existing deep pond for warm-water fish (Unit A, Recommendation 21)
- Install 4 artificial wildlife/fish structures (Unit C, Recommendation 4)
- Selectively harvest mature hardwoods (Unit C, Recommendation 8)
- Construct 4 shallow water ponds for wildlife (Unit C, Recommendation 22)
- Invasive Species Control (Unit A, Recommendation 16)

- Selectively harvest mature hardwoods (Unit B, Recommendation 7)
  - Construct 1 shallow water pond for wildlife (Unit D, Recommendation 23)
- ### Medium Priority Projects (should be completed within the next 5 years):
- Establish a native grass prairie (Unit A, Recommendation 18)
  - Install 2 platforms and educational signage (Unit C, Recommendation 12)
  - Plant ~250 Conifers (Unit C, Recommendation 2)
  - Install 2 platforms and educational signage (Unit A, Recommendation 11)
  - Mulch, restore existing trail; and create new trail (Unit A, Recommendation 9)
  - TSI thinning of pines for release of desirable tree species (Unit F, Recommendation 6-1)
  - Mulch, restore existing trail; and create new trail (Unit C, Recommendation 10)
  - Plant ~100 hardwoods (Unit E, Recommendation 4)
  - Plant ~50 conifers (Unit E, Recommendation 3)
  - Fertilize and plant wildlife food patches (Unit A, Recommendation 20)

### Low Priority Potential Projects (no commitment as to timing):

- Install dam on adjacent property in order to create a wetlands area on our property (Unit B, Recommendation 14-2)
- Plant ~250 shrubs (Unit A, Recommendation 5)
- Plant ~2,000 conifers (Unit A, Recommendation 1)
- Expand Red Pine Plantation to the west by planting additional conifers (Unit F, Recommendation 6-2)
- Sharecropper hayfield, crop field, and mowing rotation (Unit A, Recommendation 19)

This plan was presented to the board for final approval on December 6, 2005 and approved on January 3, 2006. Actual projects for implementation will be approved on an annual basis.

THANK  
YOU...



### A big "thank-you" goes out to our featured speakers at the dinner seminars this year.

More than 100 people packed the room to watch Kevin Feenstra show off slide after slide of big steelhead and trout. If you would like to get in touch with Kevin for a guide trip, you can reach him at 231-652-3528.

John Miller's seminar was equally as impressive. Somebody give this guy a PhD in mayfly entomology! John guides out of Gray Drake Outfitters and can be contacted at 231-652-2868.



## ...from the Fly Bench

### FLY FISHING FOR SMALLMOUTH BASS

by Dick Smith

***In the second summer of their lives, when they are about 5 or 6 inches long, smallmouth bass begin to feed heavily on minnows,*** and for the rest of their lives, minnows make up a majority of the food they eat.

Smallmouths like crayfish, and they eat them whenever they can catch them. But crayfish are nocturnal and they are very good at hiding where the bass can't get at them, so they are not a reliable source of food for smallmouths.

They will eat an extraordinary variety of things, but minnows are what smallmouths expect to eat, and a good bucktail with a little flash will catch smallmouths all season long.

With fish, speed is proportional to length. The larger a fish grows, the faster it can swim. Smallmouths have a top cruising speed of about ten times their length per second and from there, they can make quick power bursts up to about half again that speed. They can accelerate quickly and make very sharp turns at high speed, so they can easily catch any small fish they find out in the open.

The broad soft tails that give them such fast acceleration also produce tremendous power at a fairly slow beat, so the fish don't use up a lot of energy when pursuing their prey. That fast acceleration and the ability make sharp turns at high speed make them very efficient predators. When they see something they want to eat they pursue it until they catch it or it gets away.

The slow beat of a smallmouth's powerful tail is very noticeable when you are playing a fairly large fish, and it is sometimes mistaken for the fish shaking its head.

Ordinary size smallmouths can catch and eat some pretty big minnows, but their food preference seems to be for fish that are about one-seventh their own length. Smallmouths from fourteen to twenty inches long are generally feeding on minnows that are two to three inches long. Flies in that size range will catch the average size fish, and they are still attractive to the largest smallmouths.

Feeding smallmouths spend a lot of time in shallow water. The most common mistake fly fishermen make when they fish for smallmouths is to fish the same kind of water that bait and hardware fishermen do. Most fly fishermen will catch more and bigger fish by changing their ideas about where to fish than by developing better techniques for fishing the old reliable deep-water pools. The quiet shallow water near the bank is where smallmouths go looking for minnows.

The color of the fly doesn't always matter when you are fishing for smallmouths, but when it does, it matters a lot, and yellow is by far the best color for smallmouth bass streamers. Smallmouths, and large trout that live in rivers, prefer to chase minnows downstream if they are going to pursue them, because their speed is much greater than that of their prey, and a fish cannot maneuver as well when it is going downstream. So it becomes a race that the larger predator usually wins.

It seems to me that the faster I fish a streamer, the more smallmouths I catch, but nearly all of the very largest smallmouths I have hooked have taken the fly when it was moving at a leisurely pace. The best smallmouth fly I have ever used is tied this way.

**Tail-** Yellow bucktail tied so that it extends about an inch and a half beyond the hook. The bucktail is tied down tightly full length on the hook shank and it is the base for the body.

**Body-** gold mylar tubing. The strings are removed from inside the tubing and it is wrapped around the body like heavy duty tinsel.

**Wing-** gold flashabou. Take half the amount of flashabou you need for the wing and tie it tightly in the middle of the bunch. Use eight or ten wraps and then fold the flashabou back and tie it tightly, leaving a small forehead on the fly. Keep the wraps back and do not tie the head all the way to the eye of the hook.



When this fly is tied properly it will not sink quickly. It has almost neutral buoyancy, just as a minnow does.

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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****MARCH 24, 2006****Annual Fundraising Banquet - Hilton Hotel in Grand Rapids.**  
**RSVP to [wmtu@wmtu.org](mailto:wmtu@wmtu.org) or 616-752-8596.****APRIL****Saturday, 15th • Steelhead float trip on Muskegon River.**  
**RSVP to [wmtu@wmtu.org](mailto:wmtu@wmtu.org) or 616-752-8596.****Saturday, 22nd • Work project on the Dolan Property.****JUNE 23-26, 2006****Thursday - Sunday****Membership meeting and outing at Wa Wa Sum.**  
**RSVP today.***....continued In The Seasons of the EmmaLee, Grand Rapids author and WMTU member Michael Lindley*

Lindley's family dates back to the early 1900's in northern Michigan. His great grandparents emigrated from Germany and moved north following opportunities in the lumber industry. Settling in Boyne City, his great grandfather became an accomplished carpenter and builder and built homes and cottages on Lake Charlevoix and Walloon Lake. Later, the family ran a small marina and boatyard on Lake Charlevoix. Lindley spent many days of his youth out at the boatyard fishing and swimming with family and trying to avoid being locked in the old wooden outhouse by his older cousins.

The story draws from some of Lindley's family history, but even more so from the rich history of northern Michigan as a whole. It also includes scenes of fly fishing on waters that Ernest Hemingway used to fish as a young man in the Lake Charlevoix area.

*The EmmaLee* is based loosely on boats like the 180 foot yacht Sylvania, that is featured on the cover of the book. It was brought back to Charlevoix each summer in the 1930's and 40's. The ship was commissioned by the Navy at the outset of World War II and never returned to Charlevoix. The latest information available on the Sylvania had it sailing the trade routes of the Greek Islands as a cargo ship through the 1960's. Its current whereabouts, or condition, are unknown.

Lindley has been writing professionally for years as a marketing and advertising executive. Recently he had his first fictional short story on fly fishing published by the literary outdoor magazine, Sporting Tales that has also featured the work of Zane Grey, Nick Lyons and Ernest Hemingway. More information on *The Seasons of the EmmaLee* and Lindley's other writing can be found at his writer's website, [www.michaellindley.net](http://www.michaellindley.net). The book is now available at Amazon.com, as well as independent bookstores, including the new River Bank Books & Music in downtown Grand Rapids.

**SPRING STEELHEAD TRIP • APRIL 15, 2006**

Spring is right around the corner and it's time to start thinking about the SWMTU spring steelhead float! This is where we pair those who don't have a boat with those that do and float the Muskegon river during prime steelhead time. It's a great opportunity to make some new friends, share tips, and maybe learn a new hotspot or two on the river.

This year's float will take place on **Saturday, April 15th**. We will meet at the Croton dam boat launch at 9:00 AM to shuttle vehicles and get set up, and then do the float down to the Thornapple launch.

Fighting large steelhead works up an appetite, so a shore lunch of grilled hamburgers and chips will be provided. **BYOB.**

*If you would like to participate, or have any questions, contact me at [greggstart@comcast.net](mailto:greggstart@comcast.net), or 646.481.1042.*

This year, Sarah Ayriess will be captaining a boat, so if any ladies are interested, this would be a great opportunity. *Tight lines, and see you at the banquet!*

**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 Risbringer, Robert Fox, Michael Lindley  
State Council- Paul Eberhart, Ron Barch



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