

TROUT TALK



Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

HOLIDAY GATHERING (Tuesday)

December 15, 2009
6:00 PM

**Pietro's Back
Door Pizzeria**
2728 Birchwood Dr., SE

RSVP- Jason Cook
616-745-5951 or
jacook@alro.com

**2010 BANQUET
MARCH 18, 2010**

DINNER SEMINARS

*Intro to
Fly Fishing*
January 2010

Guest Speaker
February 2010

Watch for details
www.info@swmtu.org

E-mail: info@swmtu.org
Web site: www.swmtu.org



TROUT TALK
Bollinger Award- Best Newsletter
1993 & 2006



President's Drift...

Andy Milnes

LET'S TRY SOMETHING NEW!

Over the course of our lives we will perform the same tasks over and over. Most repetition comes unconsciously, we are creatures of habit. We often take the same route to work, buy the same groceries at our favorite or closest store, we tend to gravitate to the easiest tasks or often take the path of least resistance. Don't get me wrong, at times there is nothing wrong with this behavior. We usually make a simple calculation and base most of our daily actions around the concept of "Time". It is the concept of time that imprisons us to try something new or take new risks; we simply convince ourselves there is no time. "I don't have the time" is or has become the mantra for many of us. But I would like to challenge all of us to look at "time" in a new way. Let's try to take a step back from the daily interference of time and ask ourselves to "make" time and control the time we have as apposed to letting time manage us or hold us back from trying something new. "I will make time, not waste time"

As an example, I made the time to try fly fishing. Too often hear that fly fishing is hard, casting the rod, choosing the right flies, attempting to read the river, etc. In it's entirety it can seem a bit overwhelming. Truly I have only been fly fishing for the past 10 years. I am always surprised at how much I still don't know about fishing. To a novice, I am a master. To some of my more knowledgeable fishing friends, I'm still a student. "Thanks for the patience guys!" But to my point, we have all made the time to try something new at one point in our lives. I never had the opportunity to meet the 16 fisherman who gathered 50 years ago and formed Trout Unlimited. These individuals made the time, or took the time to start something they believed in, to improve the habitat of our rivers and streams. If we had the chance to go back to George Griffith's home on the banks of the Au Sable River 50 years ago and share with them the success they nurtured, would they believe us? In the past 50 years Trout Unlimited has grown to over 140,000 members and 400 active chapters. This has translated to millions of dollars of donations and the restoration of over 10,000 rivers and streams. Using these examples; the simple concept of making time does have an impact.

Your SWMTU chapter is making the time to alter our local rivers path and improve habitat. When looking at our schedule of events coming in the fall and throughout the winter, please notice two things. The first is we have a seminar this winter titled "Introduction to Fly Fishing". I would ask or if possibly challenge you to please make the time to share your love of our rivers with someone new. Secondly, we have a very committed group of people that make the time to help with our mission; the mission that was started 50 years ago this summer. So when you catch yourself saying "I don't have time", stop and reconsider that thought process. And simply say I have the time, "Lets try something new!"

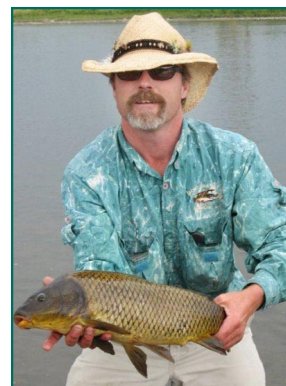


from The Riffles...

Welcome aboard Stuart

Stuart Decker has joined the SWMTU Board... let me introduce him:

Stuart, a graduate of Montana State University with a BS in biology, has an extensive background in the fishing industry while in Montana. He was a guide and part owner operator of the Complete Fly Fisher in Wise Montana over a twenty year stretch. Stuart served on the Big Hole River Foundation Board for seven years, four as president. During those years in the fishing industry and with the Big Hole River Foundation he participated in endangered species issues surrounding Fluvial Graying. These efforts included working with agencies at the local, state, and federal level; private land holders and a host of other stakeholders. In 2007, Stuart returned to Michigan. With his vast experience and special interest in working with kids, we look forward to his active participation.




Down Stream...
**A TRIBUTE TO
CATCH AND RELEASE**

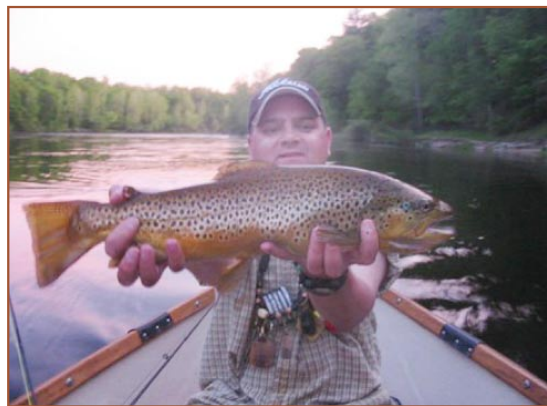
Jon Satala • 2009

It had been three weeks since my fishing buddy had enticed and landed a certain fish on a dry fly. On a beautiful blue-ribbon trout stream in northern Michigan, trout were sipping drake spinners all around us. Slowly motoring his riverboat upstream, in search of a larger fish, we both noticed the telltale subtle swirl of a bigger fish in an eddy near the bank. Cautiously, we approached from downstream and anchored in the swift current just down from the hole. We waited and watched to see if the bigger fish would again make his move on the sporadic serving of drake spinners that would intersect his feeding plot.

Each time he quietly kissed the surface, leaving a smooth ripple, our minds raced at the thought of him eating one of our hand-tied offerings. We began taking turns gently casting ahead of where we thought he would come up. But the funky currents inevitably dragged our lines just enough to change the course of our fly on the water making it look unnatural to the fish. Many times the big brown taunted us by sipping bugs that were floating mere inches from ours. We then relocated upstream of the hole in an attempt to get the necessary angle which would enable us to present our fly with a natural drag-free drift. Patiently, we took turns to see which of us would be "the Lucky One". Lucky?

If you know anything about big sipping brown trout, you know that luck is not a factor. Knowing our chances were limited, we continued to restrain ourselves from making hasty casts in a race to see who would hook-up first. So we continued to observe, attempting to decode his feeding pattern. After several attempts each, my friend Andy finally broke the code. I watched with great defeat as the brown slurped up my friend's offering. Although I was still happy for him, the battle was only half won.

The fish dove hard and strong as Andy's little four-weight fly rod



with 5X tip-pet hung on for dear life. It was definitely a give-and-take situation. My friend would give and the fish would take. Somehow, though, after several strong runs, he managed

to bring the fish close enough to the boat that I could scoop his trophy with the net. I was happy to be on the same boat and to have gotten a little credit for successfully netting this fish, but I was secretly

envious. I questioned if I had the same skills required to entice a large resident brown with a dry fly. Gently cradling the twenty inch brown in the cool water, we watched with satisfaction as he recovered and slipped back into the depths of the river. Little did I know that three weeks later I would have the chance to prove myself.

Three weeks later...



I couldn't believe I was now hooked up on a big fish out of the same swirling eddy that Andy found his trophy. I thought out loud, "This one is pretty big. I wonder if it could be

the same one you caught?" My friend quickly discounted that notion. But at least now my ego could be at peace...mostly. I still had to land him. After a good thirty minute bicep killing battle, Andy successfully netted the brown just as I had done for him three weeks earlier. It's length was exactly twenty inches. This forced us to revisit the possibility that I had just caught the exact same fish.

Does catch-and-release really work?

A day later my friend sent me an email which included side-by-side photos of our fish. I carefully examined the shape and pattern of the spots. It was a sure thing. The spots match perfectly. See for yourselves! These photos have not been Photoshopped or altered in any way, I swear. By the way, this fish was safely released again and will be waiting to do battle with the next skilled angler.



Trying to catch fish distinguishes the angler from other walkers in nature, and, as the angler binds himself by arbitrary rules, to catch fish with difficulty is his unique pleasure.

JOHN MCDONALD (1972)

2009 CONSERVATION WRAP-UP

JR Hartman • SWMTU Conservation Chair

It's been a busy conservation season for Schrems West Michigan TU. This was the most ambitious season we have had in the five years I have been involved with the chapter. Five west Michigan cold water river systems have benefited from our chapters money, labor and love this year! None of this would be possible without you, our members and volunteers. I have to give a huge thanks to all of you who came out this year to help. For those of you who wonder how to get involved, this is it. Our conservation projects are where the rubber meets the road, where your actions change the future of our cold water resources, and you have the chance to improve our watersheds for future generations. We want and need your involvement. You needn't any more skill than the passion for better trout habitat!

(Rich, it would be great to insert some pictures from different projects we did this year, and stuff like the Eagle Scout benches. I will look and see if I have any, and tell the other guys to email pics to you)

Exciting projects for 2010 and beyond

Did you know there are 32 dams registered with the state of Michigan in the Muskegon River Watershed and several dozen more that are unregistered? We, along with our partners at the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, (MRWA) think this is too many. We have awarded the MRWA a donation to help study the removal of the Marion dam and impoundment in the Village of Marion. The Marion dam is known to contribute substantial water temperature increase and it no longer serves a purpose. The potential removal will open up miles of blue ribbon trout fishing, reconnect the bisected Middle Branch of the Muskegon River, and create a natural and pleasing public area in Marion. This is just the first in what we envision being many future dam removals in the Muskegon River Watershed.

Many of you know that our Rogue River is now designated a Trout Unlimited National Home River Initiative project. This means that when

funding is secured, TU National will manage a multi-year project on the Rogue River using us and a full-time TU project manager. The projects will cover the board, anything from river clean-ups to working with municipalities on ground water recharge, and thermal pollution. The efforts to raise the money for this project continue, and we are hopeful to get some positive news this fall regarding two grant requests we have submitted with local organizations. If we are successful with these two grants, this project could be kicked off as early as spring of 2010.

We are currently working with the Kent County Drain Commission and Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. to develop a significant project grant proposal for the Coldwater River. We are applying for roughly \$40,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes Community Grants 2009 for habitat improvement on the Dolan property. For those of you who do not know the Dolan, it is a 127 acre property in SE Kent County that was given to the Schrems Chapter in 1983. The property was given to us by the Maher Family to be preserved as a natural area for the study and enjoyment of flora, fauna and fish. It is currently maintained for public use and we encourage you to get out there and do some fishing and exploring.

Stay tuned for more information regarding these new and exciting future projects. If you have any questions or comments regarding these projects, or potential new ones, please contact us at info@swmtu.org. Again, I would like to thank all of the volunteers that we had this year and encourage all of you to join us next year for a project or two. Come on out and learn more about local watersheds, find another fishing hole and make a few new friends. A special thanks to my fellow board members for your efforts in leading these projects and inspiring new ones.

Meet your SWMTU Board....

Questions/Answers of board member:

Larry Risbridger

SWMTU Question: How long have you been a member of TU?

Larry Risbridger: 15 years

SWMTU: What's your favorite fly?

L.R.: Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph

SWMTU: What's your favorite fishing waters?

L.R.: Michigan- AuSable River, Wyoming- Yellowstone National Park

SWMTU: Any secret techniques?

L.R.: Dry fly fishing for Cutthroats in Montana & Yellowstone National Pk.

SWMTU: What was the trout you most remembered?

L.R.: A 19 inch west slope Cutthroat trout caught in Spotted Dog Creek, on a friend's ranch in Montana.

SWMTU: What have you been fly fishing for?

L.R.: Trout...Steelhead and Salmon in Michigan. Cutthroat trout in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Atlantic Salmon in Scotland. Strippers in Maine.



Last Cast....



Bet you can't guess: What kind of trout? Where Caught? and Caught by who? If you think you know the answer, go to: info@swmtu.org (yes, winner will receive a gift).

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

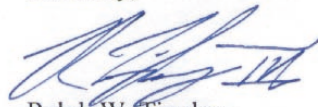
April 14th, 2009

Schrems West Michigan Chapter of Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 230094
Grand Rapids
Michigan 49523

To the Members of Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited,

I would like to thank all of you for awarding me the Cornelius M. Schrems Scholarship. It means a great deal to be recognized by a group of conservationists and anglers who continue to do so much for our countries' rivers and streams. It is also an honor to receive an award associated with a man who so influential to the creation and growth of Trout Unlimited. My research on Arctic grayling has hit a milestone this month in the completion of my habitat selection model, and I am ready to go into the field this summer to finish the last portion of the project. At its completion, I hope to present my work to your chapter of Trout Unlimited, as well as others throughout the state. Once again, thank you for supporting the continuation of my research.

Sincerely,



Ralph W. Tingley



DEPARTMENT OF
FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE

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Editors note:

Tony Tingley is the current recipient of our Cornelius Schrems Scholarship. This scholarship, founded in 1982 by Sis Schrems after the passing of her husband, Cornelius, is awarded annually to a Michigan State University student enrolled in the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife graduate program and is recognized for working toward the mission of SWMTU. For a complete list of scholarship recipients (most with bio's and photo) go to www.info@swmtu.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY 'TU' (TO YOU/TROUT UNLIMITED)



Although the weather was cold and wet, the Michigan TU 50th celebration, held at the DNR Rayburn property on the banks of the Au Sable, on July 18, 2009 was a special day. The date was significant in that persuasively 50 years earlier, Trout Unlimited was “born” at the Barbless Hook when George Griffith assembled fifteen like-minded sportsmen to form our beloved organization. TU Chapters from around the state, including Schrems, manned booths; music by Mike Freer and Alan Cayn; Robert Traver writings/reading by Glen Blackwood; face painting; fly tying/casting workshops made for an enjoyable day for all.



The National TU 50th was held the week of August 17th at the Grand Traverse Resort. Schrems WMTU co-hosted an evening reception with the Frank 'Bob' Perrin (Lansing) Chapter. Among those stopping by was Michigan TU Executive Director Brian Burroughs...seen here with left to right: Andy Milnes, President, Schrems WMTU; Rich Steketee, Schrems WMTU Board member and Brian.

Rich Steketee, Editor



COLDWATER RIVER

Brad Boomstra

As a former member of the SWMTU board, I have heard plenty of tales about the Coldwater River, and I have to admit that I was somewhat skeptical of these stories. I decided this year to pack up my rod and reel and give the Coldwater a try to see for myself if the stories I heard were true. I have been very impressed. The fishing and habitat on this river is excellent, for the most part, as evidenced by several nice trout in my net. However, the thing that struck me most is how unimpressive the stretch of river along the Dolan Property downstream of Tyler Creek appears. There is little habitat and it is obvious that this section of the river was dredged, with large spoil ridges lining both sides of the drain. In talking to fellow TU members, Coldwater River Watershed Council (CWRWC) members, and fellow fisher-people, I know there are a few fish caught in this area, but I think there is significant potential for improved instream habitat.

So after discussions with TU board members, Oak Brook Chapter TU members, CWRWC council members and a buddy who is a fisheries biologist, a coalition of partners has been formed and we are putting together several grant applications to procure funds to install instream habitat within the Coldwater River along the Dolan property. It is our hope that by improving the section of river along the Dolan property, the improved habitat will bring more fish and bring more interest from fisher-people who will take a vested interest in protecting and utilizing this fishery.



Electrofishing Survey (Left to Right): JR Hartman, Aaron Snell, and Brad Boomstra.

I recently had the opportunity to assist with an electrofishing survey of the Coldwater. We did capture a few trout at the Dolan Property, but numbers and quality of fish were very low compared to those captured from a nearby reach. It was quite an experience to see exactly where the fish were hiding. The difference in habitat was profound; the Dolan Property lacks the deeper pools, woody structure and overhanging banks in which the trout hid in the nearby section.

The plan to improve the Dolan Property includes placement of large woody debris structures designed to emulate naturally occurring river debris, providing current breaks and a deep pool with overhead cover. Unlike natural log jams or randomly placed logs, the structures will be constructed in an orientation to reduce bank erosion and navigational hazards. Significant base flow in the Coldwater will ensure that the logs remain submerged, thereby preventing decomposition of the wood.

Similar habitat improvement work in upstream reaches has yielded significant increases in the size and number of trout. Several log structures were placed in the stream nearly a decade ago, and recent Michigan Department of Natural Resources surveys indicate that the number of trout per mile exceeds 800 fish, with over half being "legal" size. Based on the presence of very small trout, natural reproduction is believed to be occurring in this reach as well. It is our desire to create the same kind of results on the Coldwater along the Dolan Property.



...From the Tying Bench

Dick Smith

Twenty-two different families of caddis flies have been found in the United States and Canada. There are 147 different genera of caddis flies, and more than 1350 different species. It is no wonder that anglers who have a pretty good grasp of the common mayfly hatches on the rivers they fish have no idea where to start when they want to learn about caddis flies.

There are two important genera of caddis flies for trout fishermen in Western Michigan. There are about 500 different species of the genus *Rhyacophila*, which are the little green worms we find so often in trout streams, and in trout. I have never sampled a trout stream in Western Michigan without finding some of them. They are quite easily identified when they are in the palm of your hand by their color and the obvious segmentation of their abdomens. Most of them look like a string of small green beads. *Rhyacophila* caddis imitations often provide good wet fly fishing for trout, and steelhead like them too.

If I was going to concentrate on one genus of caddis flies for the Muskegon River, it would be *Hydropsyche*. They are net spinners and make little sieves of silk in the water. They are also fairly easy to identify when they are in your hand. They never seem to straighten out their bodies, so they always look curved. They have branched, plume-like gills on their abdomens, and each one has what looks like a tiny hairy brush at the end of its abdomen. Adult *Hydropsyche* caddis often provide some good dry-fly fishing during the day.

They drop downstream from the rock-bottomed riffles where they live most of their lives to emerge in quieter water downstream. They often start

emerging in the morning and continue all day long. Mating generally takes place late in the afternoon, and then the females lay their eggs in the evening. A couple of wet-fly patterns developed more than a hundred years ago in Northern England are still good flies to fish in the fast water of the Muskegon River. The old Woodcock and Yellow soft-hackle wet fly, and the similar Dark Woodcock and Green both work fairly well on the Muskegon. They work best when they are slightly weighted. A fly with a body of hare's ear and a wing of light-colored woodcock breast feather is a good fly to fish on the surface, or in the surface film. I generally tie that surface pattern like a soft-hackle fly. Then I gather the fibers of the woodcock feather together over the back of the body of the fly and tie them in place as a wing. There is no hackle and no tail on that fly, just a body and a wing. Good caddis imitations can be tied in whatever form or type of dry fly you like best, but there are a couple of things about caddis flies that seem to be regularly overlooked by fly tiers. The bodies of the adults are noticeably shorter than their wings. The wings are often twice as long as the body, and the wings are folded tightly over the body, which makes the adult a very slender-looking fly. Adult caddis flies are thin for their length, and they do not have tails. The wings should be tied so they are longer than the body, but not much wider than the body. The most effective caddis imitations for the Muskegon River are generally tied with small bodies of tan, olive, or yellowish-green, and with wings of a tarnish color like lemon wood duck or mallard, or a woodcock breast feather. The flies don't need much hackle unless you intend to skitter



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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.



Schrems WMTU
Trout Unlimited
West Michigan Chapter
P.O. Box 23009
Grand Rapids, MI 49523-0094



Salmon-in-the-Classroom Update

We welcome two schools that are adding Salmon-in-the-Classroom for the 2009-10 school year curriculum:

- Goodwillie Environmental School (Forest Hills School System) with teacher Scott Moorehead.
 - West Michigan Academy of Environmental Sciences (Charter School) with teacher Teresa Larkin.
- They join three continuing SIC programs at:
- Calvin Christian HS (4th year) teacher Mike Hoekwater;
 - Lowell HS (2nd year) teacher Tammy Coleman; and
 - Hopkins Middle School (2nd year) teacher Rich Reszka.

Thanks to you and your continued support (Annual Banquets, Golf Outings, Blast for Conversation) of your Schrems WMTU Chapter, we can continue to add SIC programs by funding the start-up equipment cost at \$1000.

Example of how SIC is being received...

To: Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited Members
Re: Salmon in the Classroom

As a biology teacher, I strive to develop lessons that are rich in experience and that provide an occasion for the students to apply these lessons in the real world. We have the wonderful opportunity to live in the Grand River watershed and within minutes of Lake Michigan. Schrem's WMTU provided my students with the opportunity to actively participate in the growth of 35 Chinook Salmon from the delicate egg stage to the juvenile stage, finally releasing them in the students' home water.

This past summer, I gratefully accepted a grant of \$1,000 generously provided to me by SWMTU. This grant provided me the opportunity to purchase a chiller (the most important component of the set up), filters and aerators. In addition, Michigan DNR provided me with *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* eggs from their wolf lake hatchery. The students assisted with tank set up and water chemistry as the salmon thrived for 6 months in the students' classroom. They students learned about fish life cycles and adaptations, human impacts, topography, watersheds and water chemistry (monitoring oxygen, temperature, nitrates, ammonia and pH levels). Over 180 students participated at various times throughout the school year and over 360 students watched the life cycle persist, becoming attached to and even naming the sturdy survivors.

In celebration of Earth Day, these juveniles were released into the students' home waters, the Flat River, and I expect that in upcoming years, these same students will be fishing for the salmon they gingerly released. I hope that in doing so, they will have gained a greater appreciation for their own impact on this valuable Michigan fishery and the water that provides our wonderful state with so many economic and recreational opportunities.

As the next generation of those who will be managing our Great Lakes and current recreators in the Flat River and its tributaries, my students have learned to appreciate their surroundings through this wonderful grant.

Gratefully,

Tammy Coleman, MS, CIG
Science Educator
Lowell High School

