SWMTU *TROUT TALK* WINNER OF THE NATIONAL TU BOLLINGER AWARD- *BEST NEWSLETTER 2006*

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

TROUT TALK

SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN TROUT UNLIMITED

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

DINNER SEMINARS

John Guilani
Friday
January 19, 2007

Reservations Requested
(see page 3 for details)

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

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

SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN
Environmentally Involved
Since 1962
TROUT UNLIMITED

President's Report...

Summer has turned into fall, with a few scattered previews of winter thrown in every now and then to remind us of the wonderful change in seasons we experience in Michigan. It is the time of year I normally enjoy the most as fishing, football, and hunting all compete for my attention, as I am sure it does for many of you.

We have had a lot going on this fall, and I want to start off my second president's column by welcoming some new members to the Schrems West Michigan Chapter of Trout Unlimited. They come to us from the former Mid-Michigan Chapter which was created a few years ago, but never found its feet with fundraising and leadership. As an organization, Trout Unlimited is making a strong effort to make sure that all of its members are assigned to active chapters like Schrems so that you have the opportunity to become involved in conservation projects, seminars, fundraisers, and receive a local newsletter like *Trout Talk.*

In our own chapter, we held a fundraiser earlier this fall which we called "Texas Hold-Em for Trout." It was a fun event as we learned our own Paul Eberhart is a fairly accomplished poker player as he made it to the final table. We are planning on repeating this type of fundraising event in the future so if you enjoy playing poker – stay tuned!

It was also fun to issue a check to Calvin Christian High School as they start their Salmon in the Classroom program. I look forward to learning about their classroom experiences with the salmon this year. Unfortunately, due to a limit on the number of permits the DNR issued for the program this year, we were unable to sponsor East Grand Rapids High School, but they are at the top of our sponsorship list for next year.

Schrems members also took part in a Muskegon River Salmon outing; a cleanup on the Pere Marquette River; attended a symposium sponsored by the Pere Marquette Watershed Council on Sea Lamprey's; walked Tyler Creek assessing its potential for improvement projects; and attended the TU Convention in Minneapolis where our chapter received the Bollinger Award for the Best Chapter Newsletter! Several of our board members work very hard to provide a quality newsletter to our members and to receive this award is quite an honor.

The Schrems chapter continues to lead as we put together restoration plans for Tyler Creek, and develop educational and entertaining seminars for the winter. The board is also working on sponsoring our own symposium focused on Muskegon Steelhead later this winter. We will have more details about this event in our next newsletter.

Dave Smith, ***President, SWMTU***

SWMTU Board Pledges $5,000 towards Tyler Creek Rehabilitation

By Dave Smith

The summer of 2006 ended in a disturbing way with the loss of over 4,000 Brown Trout and several thousand minnows of various species along a four-mile stretch of Tyler Creek in southeast Kent County. The fish kill was caused by manure washed into the creek during a heavy rain one evening. The most likely source of the manure was a farm field where it was spread just prior to the rain although the slight possibility exists that the manure was dumped by a sewage hauler at a bridge just upstream from this same field.

Schrems WMTU members were actively involved in the investigation of this incident. When public statements from the DEQ implied that this was a natural event caused by warm temperatures and heavy rain, we disagreed and took action. We filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with both the DNR and DEQ and formed a committee with the help of the Lansing and Kalamazoo TU Chapters to study the available data. We were fortunate to have as part of our committee Jim Bedford from Lansing. Jim was the person who originally reported the fish kill to the DNR and DEQ the morning it occurred. After reviewing the available data and Jim's first-hand report, our committee quickly reached the conclusion that this was not a natural event and we reported this to the NRC at their September meeting in Saugatuck. The DEQ also reached this same conclusion after testing of some of the dead fish found significant amounts of fecal matter in their gills.

....continued on page 6

...Awards

SWMTU ACCEPTS NATIONAL AWARD FOR BEST NEWSLETTER

By Dave DeJonge

At the national TU convention this past September in Minneapolis, SWMTU was honored with the 2006 Jean Bollinger Outstanding Newsletter Award for Trout Talk.

National TU gives the award annually to one or two chapters nationwide. This year, Michigan did well! Our state council was also honored with a Bollinger Award for its well-done publication TROUT.

While each newsletter is organized and printed by co-editors Ron Barch and Dave DeJonge, the creation is really a group effort. During the past year Dick Smith has treated you to insightful columns on fly-tying. In the coming year you'll get a chance to read some of his interesting memories of growing up with a fishing rod in hand. All our other board members also contribute regularly by writing about their involvement with TU, whether that is conservation, fund-raising, membership outings or education.

This is actually the second time SWMTU has received the award. The first time was in 1993. Long-time SWMTU members may recognize the common thread. His name is Bob McKeon. He's responsible for the layout and the clever illustrations you see. Even though Bob lives in sunny Arizona, he's still involved with our chapter. Without his talent, *Trout Talk* wouldn't look nearly as nice as it does. And with Bob, the chapter would not have won this award two times.

Dave Smith (left) accepts the Bollinger Award on behalf of SWMTU. Rich Bowman (right) accepts the other Bollinger Award for the Michigan TU publication TROUT. Mike Lagowski (center) accepts the Silver Trout Award for the Kalamazoo Valley TU Chapter

Looking toward the future, we're hoping some other members of the chapter would like to be involved in creating this newsletter. If you have any experience in writing, graphic design or printing, this is a great way to start getting more involved with TU.

Down Stream...

Grand River Memories

By Dick Smith

When I was a young boy I used to ride my bike down to the Grand River in April. I'd go down to where the dipnetters hung their big dip nets from the trees along the riverbank.

Every spring the dipnetters would rebuild their clapboard shacks and work on the plank walkways that led from the shacks to the nets.

The planks went out to where a guy with a small, long-handled net could get the fish out of the big square dip nets when they were raised out of the water.

Some of the netters had pulleys hanging from the branches and they raised their nets by pulling on a rope. But most of them had their nets rigged on long thick heavy poles that were the trunks of small trees they had cut down. The poles were about four inches in diameter at the lifting end, and about two and a half inches thick where the net was attached. They used simple leverage to raise their nets. If the point of balance was right, it wasn't really hard to raise a big net, and they could get them up faster than the guy with the pulleys.

Actually it was kind of fun to raise a net, if you only did it a few times. When there were a lot of fish moving, the netters sometimes lifted their nets a hundred times or more in an evening. It was more like hard work than fun when you lifted one that many times. So the netters were always friendly to kids. They liked to have young boys hanging around, because most of them couldn't resist lifting the nets if they were offered a chance to do it. Most of them, like me, were always curious about what might be in the net when it came up.

If there were a lot of fish going through, the dipnetters worked their nets pretty steadily. When things were slow, they played cards and drank beer. They lit their lanterns and stayed later into the night than I was allowed to stay out.

They sold as many of the fish they caught as they could. When they had more fish than they could sell, they smoked the extras and sold as many of the smoked fish as they could sell. They kept the fish they caught in a big live box at the water's edge. The suckers, whether they were taken right from the net, or out of the big live box, were individually wrapped in a sheet of newspaper when they were sold. They were wrapped up while they were still alive, which helped to keep them fresh when the buyer took them home. Then the wrapped fish were put in a brown paper grocery bag to keep the slime balls off the buyer's car upholstery when he put them in his car.

Suckers were what they caught most of the time. Thirty-five cents was a common price for an average sucker, or they were three for a dollar.

It was the ancient and honorable custom among the dipnetters that the money from any sale of less than a dollar went into the beer fund. If a sale was a dollar or more, the dollar went into a fund that was divided up equally among the men who worked the nets. But the guy who was working the live box, the one who was selling and wrapping the fish, got to keep the odd change from any transaction over a dollar, such as if he sold four fish for a buck thirty-five. Then the thirty-five cents went right into his pocket. If the sale was two dollars exactly, all the money went into the fund that was divided up equally. If it went over two dollars, the change again belonged to the seller. So the pricing was sometimes designed to make that a good deal for the guy who was selling the fish. If a customer wanted six fish, he might offer him the two biggest in the box for forty cents each, and then three average size fish for a dollar, and then throw in a small one for a dime. In theory, that would put a dollar in the common fund, and ninety cents in his pocket. But he had to be careful not to get too greedy, because if he got too near to two dollars, the buyer might give him two dollars and tell him to keep the change, which ironically he couldn't do, and then he wouldn't get anything except his share of the two dollars when it was split up equally. No matter how the sales of a dollar or more worked out, there were always enough people who came along and just bought one or two fish at a time to keep money in the beer fund.

Sometimes the netters came up with a walleye or a pike. By law, those gamefish had to be thrown back, and the netters were always pretty careful about the law. They were very careful to make sure the law wasn't around when they threw those fish back, which to them meant back into the bushes behind them, because a decent walleye was worth two dollars. And if they couldn't sell it surreptitiously, one of the netters would be eager to take it home and eat it.

The dipnetter's shanties were only meant to shelter them for a short time each year, and there was no such thing as a material considered unsuitable for building a shanty. Scrap lumber, tarpaper, and cardboard were popular, but anything that would last for two, or hopefully three, weeks would do.

The shanties were generally designed to hold four people sitting on folding chairs around an old card table, with enough additional room for two dogs, and a beer cooler on the floor. There was always a lantern hanging over the card table so they could play cribbage when things were slow. A shanty was considered sufficiently level if a beer bottle would stand up on the card table. A dipnetter could build a suitable shanty in about an hour with nothing but a hammer and nails. And he could tear it down in about two minutes with his bare hands.

from the Riffles...

Salmonid of the St. Mary's

We're honored to have **John Guiliani**, a guide out of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, speak at our next dinner seminar.

Guiliani has been guiding anglers in the St. Mary's River area for more than 15 years. His vast experience with the area and its fishing, especially steelhead and Atlantic salmon will make for a memorable seminar.

John has been featured in magazines such as "Wild Steelhead and Salmon" and "Michigan Fishing and Wildlife" and was recently profiled in the Detroit Free Press.

John has even guided one of his clients to a World Record Atlantic salmon caught on six-pound test, a fish that weighed in at 18.5 pounds!

The St. Mary's River has been attracting fish and fishermen for thousands of years. Historically, fishermen came to the St Mary's rapids for whitefish. These days, although whitefish are still available, more anglers are looking for steelhead and Atlantic salmon as well as other species. The rapids offer a variety of fish, including steelhead, Atlantic salmon, Chinook salmon, pink salmon, coho, rainbow trout and brown trout – many of which may be caught in the same day!

If you'd like to contact John, you can do so at:
www.johngiulianifishing.com or (705) 942-5473.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO THE DINNER SEMINAR!!!
BRING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER!!!

Because seating for dinner is limited, please RSVP by Friday, January 12 to wmtu@wmtu.org or call Gregg Start at: 616-481-1042.

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 19, 2007
Place: Grand Rapids Hilton - Patterson and 28th St SE
Time: Doors open at 6pm, Dinner at 7pm, Speaker at 8pm
Cost: $20. Includes dinner - there will be a cash bar

Committee Reports...

SWMTU partners for wetland restoration

Over the past two years, a wetland on the Dolan Property was restored by three organizations trying to improve habitat for wetland creatures as well as improving water temperature in the Coldwater River. These partners consist of SWMTU, the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, and the Coldwater River Watershed Council.

As the property owner, SWMTU paid for the permits; CWRWC coordinated the work, and MWC hired the contractor and did the permit drawings and supervision of the work. Oakbrook TU from Illinois helped clear the site for the bulldozer last July along with SWMTU, Lansing's Perrin TU Chapter and CWRWC on a very warm day.

This wetland restoration will back up an outflow from one of the spring-fed ponds on the Dolan Property and create about an acre of seasonal wetlands. The level of the pond will rise about 18 inches during high water periods, making wetland habitat for amphibians, reptiles, birds, invertebrates and plants. As the water table lowers, the water in the wetland will percolate into the ground and go to the river. The rains of recent weeks have started to fill the main reservoir and next spring the Dolan will have water in an old river channel for us to observe a wetland up close as the dam itself is part of the main trail along the river. Thanks to all who helped. See you on the water.

Paul Eberhart

Rainbow trout fishing is as different from brook fishing as prize fighting is from boxing.
ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1920)

Just Beyond the Bend...

In early October, a chilly morning gave way to blue skies and sunshine on our annual salmon float. About 20 SWMTU members and friends floated the Muskegon River from Croton Dam down to the Thornapple access.

The river was full of fresh king salmon, with plenty of hookups for everyone. We had some returning anglers, as well as some new faces, and we were able to get to know everyone over a shore lunch of grilled cheeseburgers.

The tentative date for our spring steelhead float is Saturday, April 14, so be sure to mark it on your calendar!

BOOK REVIEW ....*from Ron Barch*

Great Lakes Steelhead
A Guided Tour for Fly Anglers

By Bob Linsenman and Steve Nevala

Backcountry Publications, 1995, 309 pages

I was originally attracted to the book *Great Lakes Steelhead* because I was interested in updating my steelheading techniques. The days of chuck and duck angling on an uncrowded stretch of the Pere Marquette during the first week of April are a thing of the past. Times change and I needed a refresher course. Linsenman and Nevala, in their comprehensive book provided just what the doctor ordered, and then some!

Great Lakes Steelhead is divided into three sections or parts. Like other books on the subject the authors offer the reader in Part I a thorough discussion of current angling techniques for Great Lakes anadromous rainbows as well as all the basic fundamentals. Part III titled The Water deals with the major tributaries of the Great Lakes which host good runs of steelhead trout. What is new and unique is found in Part II. This section of the book provides summaries of a day on the water with some of the best guides in the business. By sharing their experiences with 16 knowledgeable steelhead guides Linsenman and Nevala allow the reader to peak over their shoulder and enjoy the game of chasing steelhead. By doing so the angler benefits by not only gaining from years of experience but also listening to unique personal insights into the often frustrating sport of angling for steelhead. As I began reading Part II of *Great Lakes Steelhead* I soon realized I was learning from the best of the best.

If you're like me and need to update your steelheading skills or are an accomplished "Chromer" fanatic wishing to hone your skills then *Great Lakes Steelhead* is for you. Finally, as a member of Trout Unlimited I found the book's dedication of special interest. Before the authors instruct or inform they take the time to say right up front, and I quote: "This book is dedicated to those individuals who take an active role in protecting steelhead and their environment, to those who contribute advocacy, time, energy, and resources to the future of the sport. To those of you who make a difference, this book is for you."

Misters Linsenman and Nevala, my hat's off to you! Thanks for a good book and an important message.

Ron Barch

Just Beyond the Riffles...

SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM

TESTIMONIAL FROM MIKE HOEKWATER AT CALVIN CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

I have been teaching biology at Calvin Christian High School for 17 years. Over the years I've found that students learn much more from hands-on projects. I've tried to incorporate projects in my biology class that involve a lot of student participation and lab investigation to allow students to do science and not just learn about science. I also think students care more about what they are learning when it involves things in the "real world" and not just from a textbook.

I fell in love with trout fishing about 10 years ago. Over the years since then I've thought about a way to try to incorporate my love for fishing with my biology teaching. Then last year I read an article in Trout Unlimited's national magazine about the Trout in the Classroom program in the state of New York. I got really excited! It was just what I was looking for. I could raise fish in my classroom, use them to teach many basic ideas about biology, and then release the fish in a local stream as part of the state's fish-stocking program. Students would not only be learning about these fish, but they would actually be helping the state in raising and releasing stocked fish.

I sent e-mails to the DNR and Trout Unlimited to find out if this program was running in Michigan. I found out that the Michigan DNR does not participate in Trout in the Classroom, but does participate in Salmon in the Classroom. Somewhere along the way I connected with Brad Boomstra, a board member of Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited. Brad explained that his TU chapter was interested in helping start SIC programs in local schools. Brad and SWMTU connected me with Maureen Jacobs, the SIC coordinator at the DNR, who assisted me in the permitting process. SWMTU also provided initial funding for the equipment necessary to set up this program.

So now I'm ready to start raising salmon and introduce my students to the biology of salmon! I have my tank and chiller set up in my classroom. On Tuesday, Nov. 14, my two biology classes and I are going to the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery in Mattawan (near Kalamazoo) where we will get a tour of their facility and learn more about fish raising and fish conservation. At that time, we will also receive our salmon eggs for hatching in our classroom. If all goes well, and the fish grow and stay healthy, my biology students and I will be releasing the salmon fingerlings in the Grand River next May.

I want to thank SWMTU for their assistance in purchasing the equipment to start this project. It will enhance my student's learning and will help raise their awareness of issues regarding fish conservation in Michigan. We will keep you informed of the progress of our salmon this school year. ***Mike Hoekwater***

Last Cast...

2006 Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited Financial Summary

Every Trout Unlimited fiscal year, (September 1 – October 31) each chapter is required to submit a financial report to TU National. Below is a summary of our fiscal year 2006 financials that I recently submitted. Overall, it was a great year. We worked on six different stream restoration projects, held five different membership/education events and spent more than 57 days volunteering for our coldwater fisheries. We are a healthy and active chapter. Look for exciting events and projects planned for 2007 in Trout Talk, and on our website, www.wmtu.org.

JR Hartman- *SWMTU Treasurer*

Revenue

Membership Events	$4,522.00
Annual Banquet	$29,954.00
Donations & Interest	$3,450.00
Total Revenue	**$37,926.00**

Expenses

Newsletter & Mailings	$2,725.00
Operating Expenses	$2,597.00
Habitat Projects	$7,278.00
Membership Events	$5,037.00
Annual Banquet	$17,675.00
Education	$2,285.00
Total Expenses	**$37,597.00**

Summary of Volunteer Hours

Conservation & Advocacy	346
Membership Events	191
General Operations	686
Education	56
Travel	105
Total Volunteer Hours	**1,394**

Up Stream....

STEELHEAD SYMPOSIUM

The chapter is in the early stages of planning a Steelhead Symposium in the Grand Rapids area.

While the event is still tentative, the idea is to bring together a variety of people to talk about the issues facing the Michigan steelhead fishery. It is seen as an opportunity to discuss the biology, river habitat, regulations and economics of steelhead fishing. The event will be open to the general public. We anticipate having speakers and a moderated panel discussion.

Most likely the event will be held on one of the final two Saturdays in February 2007.

The genesis of the event began with a report that Matt Supinski wrote regarding the status of Michigan's steelhead. His report was read by the SWMTU board, the Michigan Council of TU, and the Michigan DNR Fisheries Division. The DNR responded to his report.

For future updates, and to read the Matt Supinski report and the DNR reply, go to www.wmtu.org.

Dave DeJonge

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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- 2007

Friday, January 19, 2007
Dinner seminar with John Guiliani

February (date TBD)- 2007
Steelhead symposium

Friday, March 23 (tentative)- 2007
Annual Fundraising Banquet

Saturday, April 14, 2007
SWMTU Steelhead outing

June 21-24, 2007
Membership meeting at Wa Wa Sum

SWMTU BOARD PLEDGES $5,000..... continued from page 1

The Tyler Creek committee has started planning for the restoration of Tyler Creek and the Schrems board has pledged $5,000 towards these efforts. We are actively seeking support from other TU chapters, and it appears that another donor is giving $5,000 to Timberland RC&D for habitat work on Tyler Creek. We are working with Timberland RC&D, the Coldwater River Watershed Council, other non-profit organizations and the DNR and DEQ to develop and implement a plan to restore Tyler Creek to reduce the risk of this type of event in the future.

I have heard more than once the question on why should we spend this time and energy on Tyler Creek? It is not a popular river with many of our members. Personally I look at our mission: "To conserve, protect and restore coldwater fisheries" and to me it does not matter if it is a popular river or not. What is important to me is the potential of Tyler Creek in the future. Perhaps Jim Bedford who is also the author of "Flyfisher's Guide to Michigan" said it best when he described Tyler Creek as "one of the two best places to fish for a chance at a brown trout over twenty inches." It is my belief that we can restore and even improve this local stream's potential for holding trophy trout.

2007 BANQUET PREPARATIONS

Right now we're in the planning stages for the 2007 fundraising banquet. If you have any donations you'd like to make now – either merchandise or cash – please call JR Hartman at 616-453-8344.

Many of the great things you saw at last year's banquet will be back: lots of high-end rod and reel packages, a wide variety of camping gear, one-of-a-kind artwork, and yes, free beer till it runs out.

The tentative date for the banquet is March 23, 2007.

2006-07 COMMITTEES: **Conservation:** Dave Smith, Chair – Paul Eberhart, Dick Smith, Ron Barch, Bradley Boomstra
Membership: Gregg Start, Dave DeJonge, Andy Milnes, George Carroll • **Communications:** Gregg Start, Dave DeJonge, Ron Barch, Dick Smith
Fundraising- Andy Milnes, Chair- Jim Scott, Teresa Skye, Larry Risbridger, Robert Fox, Erick Stark
State Council: Paul Eberhart, Eric Starck

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