



Southeast  
Minnesota

Trout Unlimited

## 2022 November Newsletter

# Southeast TU MN Hotline

Editorial by Carl Berberich



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### Fly Fishing Minnesota Book Publication

Long-time TU member, MNTU Vice Chair of Northern MN and Great Waters Expo manager Carl Haensel has written and published a book called “*FLY FISHING MINNESOTA*”. Carl lives between Duluth and Two Harbors, Minnesota and has been a fishing guide for many years. His new book covers many topics: Northern Trout Streams, Southern Trout Streams, Trout Lakes, Warm Water Rivers, and Warm Water Lakes.

At this time, when purchasing the book through his website [Namebini](#), the book is available in a pre-order status. That means, one immediately gets the PDF version of the book, and the book will ship once they are printed. Over 125 specific waters are described in this book and features many TU members, including myself (with pics) fishing a little brook trout stream Newburg Creek.

### Winter Fish Camp at Whitewater State Park

There will be a winter fish camp again at Whitewater State Park at the Group Center site. This is open for all members and put on by TCTU. This will be on Friday Dec 2-4 for two nights at a cost of only \$85. The description of the event is as follows:

*Welcome back to our annual Winter Fish Camp!*

*This year, we are returning to a full weekend event. The event starts on Friday Dec. 2nd at 4pm and ends on Sunday Dec. 4th until 10am. We will do more than just fishing!!!! Here is sneak peak of what is to be expected.*

**Friday:** Chili cook-off competition followed by social hour.

**Saturday:** Presentations from Monta Hayner (Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota) and Vaughn Snook (Lanesboro DNR), and Paul Johnson (fly tying expert). There will be some fishing, relax by a warm fireplace, dinner, and game night!

**Sunday:** Breakfast, relax, last chance to catch the big one!

*Meals, sleeping cabin, assistance on the stream, fishing gear (if you need some) will be provided for this event. Bring a festive costume if you desire. Register online [here](#). This is at **Whitewater State Park**, 19041 Hwy 74, Altura, MN 55910*



### Dustan Hoffman is leaving TU position

Dustan Hoffman our MNTU Project Manager for SEMN Driftless Area Restoration is leaving his MNTU position and is starting a new job as a Stream Habitat Specialist for Minnesota’s DNR Fisheries Habitat Program in the Southeast. So, congratulations Dusty, we will miss you, but it sounds like you really are not leaving, and we are gaining a great friend in the DNR. I hope you will still consider publishing articles for our newsletter.

## HTU Members Meeting on Nov 7

By John Weiss, HTU Board member

Photos by John Weiss

At our Nov. 7 meeting, Paul Krolak was surprised, honored - and speechless.

He thought he was going to lead a ZOOM meeting with MNTU president Brent Notbohm but oddly, in the small in-person audience was Duke Welter of Wisconsin, former head of TU DARE.

Before we got to Notbohm, however, Welter came to the front with a long metal tube in his hand. He took a new 4-weight bamboo rod out of it and gave it to Krolak. "There are people who make chapters work," he said and Krolak is one of them; Krolak is our habitat coordinator.



He explained that William Lamberson, a past president of the Mid-Missouri TU Chapter, loves to come to the Driftless to fish and many years ago, learned to make bamboo rods. He makes about one a month and decided to give away four to TU members in the Driftless who improve the already great fishing. When Welter asked Hiawatha leaders who should get the rod, they agreed on Krolak.

Here is how Lamberson explained it in an email: "The work that Hiawatha and other chapters have done to restore streams in the Driftless has been tremendous. I have built rods for many years and have donated roughly 70 for fundraising and to reward outstanding TU volunteers and staff.

"I have traveled some for work and have often carried a fly rod along. That had allowed me to fish for trout in many countries and across the US. I am a Covid cancelled trip away from having caught trout on every continent (except Antarctica of course). Nevertheless, the Driftless streams remain perhaps my favorite places to fish.

"Given that I don't have financial resources to contribute significantly to TU efforts, donating rods for auctions or raffles has been a small way to assist."

Krolak said he's doing what Lamberson is doing - using his talents for the cold-water resource. He is a Lourdes High School graduate, 1981, and joined when in high school. In college, he quit but rejoined in 2005-06 when he came back to Rochester, working as an engineer. Instead of only fishing, he decided to also help the resource. "It has always been because of what TU represents, cold-water fishing," he said. "They are there for the fish .... they need people to do stuff, so I did stuff."

Ray Ricketts helped him learn about habitat work and he's taken over from Ray. For a while, he did a lot of the work of working on habitat but now, it's has been more taken over from the state

TU, he said. But he still helps the DNR and state develop the list of which streams will get Legacy money. The DNR has a small crew and does some of the work but overall, TU gets the bigger Legacy dollars. “It’s kind of cooperative,” he said. TU helps decide which streams will get work done, but the DNR does need to give out permits.

Krolak figures he puts in about 80 hours a year at the coordinator. Also, because we are still looking for a chapter president, he and a few others are each doing a little bit of what a president would do, such as organize meetings. Others, work on putting out this newsletter or the new TU web page, or write, he said.

“If there were more people stepping up, I would be all right stepping back,” he said.

Ultimately, Krolak said” “Somebody has to do it.”

And now, because he’s somebody, he will again be fishing with bamboo. “I’m going to go fishing,” he said.

## Win-Cres TU Chapter Meeting Oct 26

By Dave Shaffer Win-Cres Board member



One of the few farms producing genetic hackle for fly tying is located a few miles south of Lanesboro. The owners, Chris and Patty Wigg, talked about their operation, Root River Hackle Co., at a meeting of the Win-Cres Chapter of Trout Unlimited in October.

“It’s been an adventure,” Chris said of the business of breeding roosters to produce dry fly feathers sold around the world.

It began in 2015, the Wiggs said, when they bought out Howard Hackle, an Alberta-based breeder of roosters for feathers are sold for fly tying. The couple brought the 650 breeding hens

to their newly built chicken farm in southeast Minnesota and began working on improving the cape and saddle hackles prized by fly tiers.

“The goal is to get as many useable feathers on the pelt,” said Chris, who has been interested in chicken breeding since childhood.

The chicken meat is strictly a byproduct and is sold for pet food. Neither of the Wiggs fly fishes. They said they don’t have time to try it. Both have full-time jobs in addition to their hackle operation. They’ve considered selling it, they said.



After seven years, Root River Hackle offers feathers in all colors favored by tiers, including shades of blue dun. The Wiggs said they produce nearly 1,000 capes and saddles per year, and sell them in United States, Canada, Italy, Ireland and elsewhere.



## Trout Unlimited One Year Free Trial Membership

By Carl Berberich

This free 1-year introductory membership is for new-to-Trout-Unlimited members of the first responder or military communities has all the benefits of a paid membership. Those who join will also receive a less tangible benefit, the pleasure of knowing they're part of a growing community of individuals who enjoy angling and want to keep America's rivers cold, clean and fishable.

Trout Unlimited’s Service Partnership is a nationwide effort to bring the healing power of the water to those members of the first responder (i.e., fire service, medical, law enforcement) and military (i.e., active-duty servicemen and women, reservists, veterans) communities, and their families, who have served our nation so boldly.



<https://www.tu.org/magazine/community/in-gratitude-to-our-veterans/>

# Town And State Park Season

By Jason Reike

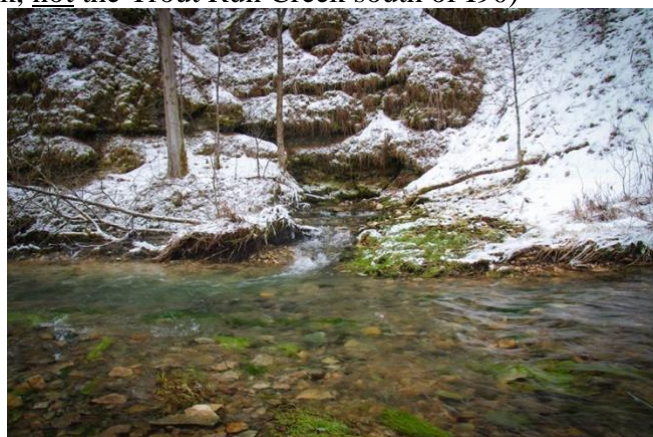
## Town and State Park Season

The town and state park catch and release season is well under way in southeast Minnesota and plenty of anglers have been taking advantage of this relatively new addition to the trout fishing season. Though not as popular as a typical weekend day in the spring, it is not uncommon to show up to Whitewater or Forestville state parks on a warm day between October 16th and December 31st and run into a half dozen die-hard anglers. In an otherwise dull and lifeless time of year, the open fishing season gives anglers itching with cabin fever an opportunity to fish some beautiful areas that still contain greenery in and along the banks of the streams, and the chance to catch brightly colored trout.



## Where to go:

- State Parks
  - Beaver Creek Valley State Park
    - East Beaver Creek
  - Forestville State Park
    - Canfield Creek
    - Forestville Creek
    - South Branch Root River
  - Whitewater State Park
    - Middle Branch Whitewater River
    - Trout Run Creek (in the state park, not the Trout Run Creek south of I90)
- Town Stretches
  - Chatfield
    - Mill Creek
  - Lanesboro/Preston
    - South Branch Root River
  - Rushford
    - Rush Creek
  - Spring Valley
    - Spring Valley Creek



## What to throw:

Typically, this time of year the water gets skinnier, the fish seek out deeper water, and in general fishing slows down. With that said, trout still need to eat, and some days can be rather good fishing. Here are some of my favorite flies for this time of year:

- Nymphs
  - BH Hares Ear (size 14-18)
  - Pink Squirrel (size 14-16)
  - Orange Scud (size 14-18)
  - BH Pheasant Tail (size 14-18)
  - BH Zebra Midge (red/black) (size 18-22)



- Dries
  - Griffiths Gnat (size 18-22)
  - Parachute Adams (size 16-22)
- Streamers
  - BH Woolly Bugger (Olive/Black) (size 2-8)
  - Fricks Fix (olive/orange) (size 2-4)
  - Thin Mint (size 2-4)
  - Circus Peanut (size 2-4)



**What to avoid:**

Fall is spawning time for brown trout, and they generally spawn in our streams between mid/late October and mid/late November. You will see trout paired up before and during the spawn in shallow, gravel filled tail-outs and riffles/runs. Many times in these areas you will see spots where trout have moved sediment from the stream bottom out of the way in order to spawn. These light colored, “cleaner” spots are called Redds. Redds should be avoided with both wading boots (walking through these areas) and flies/lures (fishing over spawning fish) to give the fish a break during their spawning time and a chance to bring forth the next generation of fish.

**Great time to get outside:**

Though the last 2 and a half months of the year are typically not the best for fishing, this season can still be a great time to wet a line and enjoy a day outside. A few of my friends and I have made it somewhat of a tradition to spend a day or two around Thanksgiving and Christmas fishing our SE Minnesota state parks and town stretches. Some years we have done well and have even landed a nice fish or two, other years we have fished hard, broke ice out of our rod guides, and just enjoyed a day together on the water. No matter how the fishing goes, we are thankful to be able to fish during this time of year and try to do our best to avoid wandering or casting over spawning trout.



## The Red Badger

By Larry Reis, Naturalist/Resource Manager for Winneshiek County Conservation Board



The red badger fly was introduced to me by my next-door neighbor, Bob Pratt, back in the late 1960s. Bob lived in Lime Springs, Iowa, and was a fly fisher who tied his own flies. I was a young teenager who was interested in fly fishing, so Bob taught me how to cast a fly rod and showed me how to fly fish on some nearby streams in southeastern Minnesota. We fished Etna Creek, Canfield Creek, and the South Fork and South Branch of the Root River. One of Bob's favorite fly patterns was what he called the red badger. It was tied with red thread and a hen badger hackle feather. He showed me how to tie the fly and I still tie the red badger pattern today since it continues to catch a few trout here in our Driftless Region Streams. As far as I know, the red badger fly pattern was designed by Bob Pratt, but I haven't done any research into whether the fly pattern was someone else's idea or not. Bob's original pattern has a red thread head, but I sometimes modify the pattern and add a black bead head. Bob might have added a bead head to his red badgers too, but I guess beads weren't added to trout flies until after Bob left us to fish Heaven's best trout streams.

The red badger is a wet fly pattern and works best when cast across the stream and allowed to swing with the current while being stripped back. The bread-and-butter hook sizes would be #12 & #14, but I've caught trout on red badgers from #20 to #4.

- Hook : 14.
- Thread : Black.
- Tip/Butt : Silver, fine wire or tinsel.
- Body : Red floss.
- Rib : Fine silver wire.
- Hackle : Palmered, badger cock.

## Monthly Fishing Reports

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

Fly fishing in SE MN has been good considering the weather conditions. Warmer temperatures are expected and the little snow we have left will start to melt. This is the time to use a stream thermometer and watch the water temps. As the snow starts to melt the stream temperature will decline which will slow the fishing down. Fish have been actively taking midges on the surface and on the bottom. Scuds will also be your best friend this time of year. Fish smaller flies, sizes 18-22 for nymphs and dry flies.

A sale is happening right now. 25-30% off winter gear, Tying Materials and more! Spend \$150 and get a free gift. Shop in store or give us a call.



LANESBORO, MINNESOTA

SHOP SMALL SALE

25-30% OFF WINTER GEAR, TYING MATERIALS AND MORE!

SPEND \$150 GET A FREE GIFT

Shop in store or give us a call!



### Decorah IA: [Bear Creek Anglers](#)

Small hatches are still happening any given day. BWO's in sizes 18-22 are working when rises are present. Small midges and midge emergers in olive or tan, as well as caddis larvae and emergers all in sizes 16-20. Prince nymphs, pheasant tails, and Higa's S.O.S. patterns in sizes 14-18 are best for larger nymph patterns.



Higa's S.O.S



## Upcoming Events:

**Win-Cres members meeting:** Wednesday, November 30 at Sobieski Lodge in Winona. The Shepards are providing the meal featuring Maid-Rite sandwiches at 6:00 pm, with the meeting at 7:00. Our presenter will be Caroline van Schaik, Driftless Area Coordinator for the Upper Mississippi River Initiative of the Minnesota Izaak Walton League. She leads the stream sampling program called SOS which samples for chemicals and macroinvertebrates in a number of SE MN streams.

**Root River Rod Co will be hosting open fly-tying night:** Thursday December 1 from 5-8pm. at Sylvan Brewing in downtown Lanesboro. Open to all. Root River Rod co will have all fly-tying materials on sale for 20% off day of.

**Winter Fish Camp at Whitewater State Park:** Dec 2-4 (Fri-Sun) Winter Fish Camp at Whitewater State Park. Our full weekend fish camp is back! Catch some big rainbows, connect with other anglers, and compete in the chili cook-off. Details and registration [here](#). This is at Whitewater State Park, 19041 Hwy 74, Altura, MN 55910

**HTU members meeting:** Dec 5 at 5:30-8:30 pm at History Center, 1195 W Circle Dr SW in Rochester. A Christmas potluck. Watch for updates. Bring what you want.

**HTU members meeting:** Jan 9 at 7 pm at 125 Live in Rochester. Justin Watkins of the MPCA will present and the DNR. This program is open to all.

**HTU Winter Fly Tying:** Working on it.

## Resources:

[SE Stream Conditions](#) (MN)

[State Map Trout Streams](#) (MN)

[Southeast Streams](#) (MN)

[AMA](#) (MN DNR Aquatic Management Areas)

[WMA](#) (MN DNR Wildlife Management Areas)

[SNA](#) (MN DNR Scientific and Natural Areas)

[State Forest](#) (MN lands)

[SE Minnesota Hatch Chart](#) (Driftless Region)

[MN DNR Fish Kills Reporting](#) (or call 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798)

[Trout-In-the-Classroom Map](#) (School Locations in MN)

[Wisconsin DNR Trout Streams](#)

[Iowa DNR Driftless Trout Stream Maps](#)

[IA WMA](#) (IA DNR Wildlife Management Areas)

[HTU IA Driftless Go-To Map](#)

**HTU Website:** <https://hiawatha-tu.org>

**TCTU Website:** <https://www.twincitiestu.org/>

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