



# TU Western Driftless Hotline

Editorial by Carl Berberich

### Spring is Here?

Spring is finally here (according to the calendar), but we’ve had extreme temperatures that went into the upper 80’s for days. So, it has felt like mid-summer heat in mid-April! I measured some stream temps on the South Fork of the Root River on April 13th that had gone over 60 degrees!

And then it snows, and so now we went back to winter! This spring has been pretty crazy, weather-wise. Hopefully it will settle down soon, and the insects can start doing their thing this spring.

### Intro to Fly-Fishing Class starting in April

The Intro to Fly-Fishing class has started again this spring on April 19. This is an Adult Education class that the Hiawatha Chapter teaches every spring in Rochester, MN. Paul Krolak teaches the lecture portion, and usually Marlene Huston (certified FFI casting instructor) teaches the casting portion but will be unavailable this session. We will probably use a team approach in teaching the casting. The class has four weekly Wednesday evening sessions at a local school, and we teach the casting in its indoor school gymnasium.

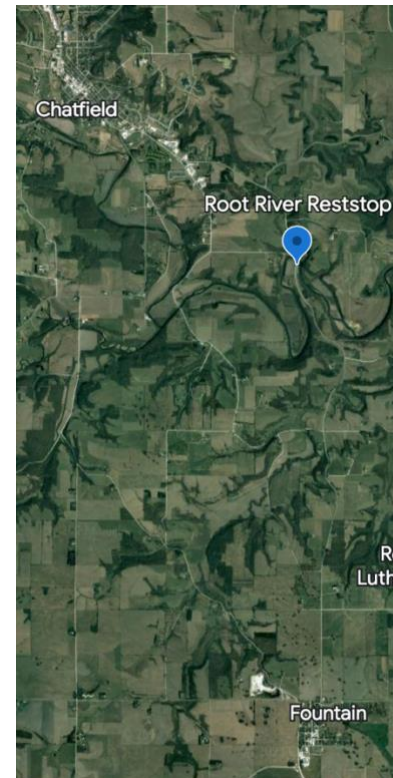
### Highway Cleanup Volunteer Activity

Hiawatha TU has been doing a Minnesota Adopt-A-Highway trash pick-up since 1984. This 2-mile section is along Hwy 52, where it crosses the Root River, south of Chatfield, MN. This year will mark its 30th anniversary. We will be meeting at the Highway 52 rest-stop alongside the Root River’s Parsley Bridge, south of Chatfield at 5:30 pm on Monday May 8 (weather permitting). So, volunteers, please show up! We need you.

Larry Haugen has been organizing this for 30 years and wishes to retire, so we are looking at someone else to volunteer to set this program up every year with the MN DOT. So... people, please consider volunteering to not only help do the pickup of litter, but to organize it with the DOT. And help celebrate 30 years of the volunteer activity.

### Hiawatha TU Bamboo Flyrod Raffle

Hiawatha TU will be holding its bamboo flyrod fundraising raffle on April 22 at Sylvan Brewing (7:00 pm) in Lanesboro, MN. This is just a block away from the Root River Rod Co, which donated this flyrod. The late Steve Sobieniak built and donated this rod, and his granddaughter will pick the winning ticket.



## Hiawatha TU at Three Rivers Outdoor Expo

By John Weiss, HTU Board member

CHATFIELD — Three Hiawatha Trout Unlimited members spent four hours in the Joy Ridge Event Center in Chatfield April 15, the opening of the regular trout season in the region, to talk trout, streams, how to tie flies, WiseH2O and anything else people wanted to chat about.



Ray Ricketts, Carl Berberich and I met maybe 30 to 40 people during the Second Annual Three River Outdoors Expo. We were there to start getting out the word that the chapter is here and also about trout and trout streams. We didn't have anything to sell, weren't out to convert anyone to fishing trout instead of bass, we just wanted to show the flag so to speak.

We also had four TU rods with us, hoping to show older children and adults how to cast a fly rod. Most children, however, were too young for a fly rod and we didn't have a chance to tout fly casting.

Carl tied some tiny blue wing olive dry flies that captivated many people who wondered how he could make something so small. Ray, on the other hand, showed them mop flies. As an afterthought, I brought along some WiseH2O strips that are about to expire or have expired (we now have new ones) and was happy to see several people watched as I got a youth's help to dip in strips and put them on the colored card to be read by my cell phone.



One man did ask what he could do to directly help streams in the Chatfield area if he joined TU. That comment

puzzled me. We do cleanups along streams and we encourage people to pick up litter. But what else can be point to that a person who wants to help can do? I think I mentioned the state's Citizen Stream Monitoring Program that he could use to monitor Mill Creek or the Root River.

Carl, as I recall, mentioned that HTU once needed to raise \$25,000 each year to do small stream restoration projects. That work, however, has been taken over with the big bucks from the Legacy program that is allowing the state, with TU help, to do several miles of stream work. So, what do we do now?

I'm relatively new to TU and am not sure what else has been done in the past but maybe we need to think more about that. What can individuals do on their own? Certainly, WiseH2O is for some people but what else can we do. For that matter, what else can I do? I had suggested getting reusable trash bags with ties, sort of like shoes are put in, so we can pick up trash. Should I look into that?

While we're at it, maybe we need to think about what we should be doing as a chapter, where should we be going now that the habitat work has been pretty much taken over by the state and DNR?

Some of the volunteer activities that we could do are:

- Continue the Highway 52 cleanup program (May 8<sup>th</sup> 2023).
- Cleanup streams such as collect and remove tires from streams (we would need DNR assistance).
- Remove invasive plant species from stream corridors such as wild parsnip! (again, DNR assistance).



## Win-Cres TU Invasive Tree & Brush Removal April 19

By Mark Reisetter Win-Cres Board member

Chapter Treasurer Tom Stoa has applied in previous years for the Stihl grant and this year it was awarded to Win-Cres. In addition to a work day along a trout stream by its employees, Stihl has given Win-Cres a \$1500.00 certificate, good for Stihl products at a local retailer.

A few members of the Win-Cres Chapter met Dan Pherson, the Stihl representative from Madison, WI, on Monday, April 17, at the Jim Albrecht farm on Little Pickwick Creek for a site reconnaissance prior to Wednesday's (April 19) tree removal and brushing activity off Little Trout Valley Road, about 3 miles south of Pickwick.

The reason for the tree and brush removal is that the riparian area could benefit from the removal of invasive tree and brush species that have shallow roots, being replaced by native hardwood tree species, native grasses, and native forbs that all root deeply holding in soils better. Project sites were often areas that had come out of grazing 40-60 years earlier, which is why they consisted of so many boxelder trees and invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle.



Stihl employees will operate an array of chainsaws while TU members will remove branches and create brush piles outside of the easement.

On the workday, the sun didn't come out, but after a two-hour delay, the rain stopped and we got our Stihl crew day in the books!

We had 22 Stihl employees from North and South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and everywhere in between!

The landowner Jim Albrecht even supplied a skid loader with grab hooks that really helped in building our brush piles! We cleared a lot of Boxelder and Willow trees out of the riparian corridor.

Dusty Hoffman with the DNR who helped with arranging the site and Sara Strassman with TU DARE joined in with the work detail along with the Stihl employees and about a dozen Win-Cres members. Connie and Dave Schulz prepared a great hot meal for everyone that included brats with sauerkraut and all the

trimmings (and cookies)!



Stihl was great to work with and their generosity not only included a \$1500.00 certificate good for Stihl merchandise, but also the outright gift of a demo brush cutter!

Other TU Chapters need to get their applications in for next year's award! If your chapter would like a chance to win a workday with Stihl and some equipment to help with your chapter's volunteer



labors, submit a letter of interest that describes your chapter's volunteer activities, your priority work areas or projects, and how you would make use of a workday and equipment to help improve trout habitat and fishing access in your area.

Submissions should be sent to Sara Strassman at [sara.strassman@tu.org](mailto:sara.strassman@tu.org) by September 30.



## TCTU and the Little Cannon River Aquatic Management Area

By Bob Luck: President TCTU

The Little Cannon River in the Sogn Valley southwest of Cannon Falls occupies a special place in my heart. A friend has a farm on the river, and he lets me fish it if I promise to lock the gate behind me and release any trout I catch. It was there, on a spring day two years ago, that I caught my first and only 20" trout in Minnesota. I was retrieving a black woolly buggler through a tongue of current, saw a flash, kept retrieving and the fish smacked it. The fight was a bit anticlimactic—the fish made one spectacular jump and then sort of gave up, but it was a beautiful wild brown, with shoulders like a linebacker.



I was thrilled to hear that the Trust for Public Land (TPL), using funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, purchased 77 acres along the Little Cannon upstream from my friend's farm, and turned it over to the Minnesota DNR as the Little Cannon Aquatic Management Area.

On April 8th, I attended the dedication event for the AMA. A crowd of 50+ neighbors and conservation group representatives (including several TU members) listened to landowner Cara McCutchan Rodriguez talk movingly of how her family had worked to conserve the land in the Sogn Valley, and how thrilled they were to have the land permanently protected. The Little Cannon is plagued by sediment and high eroding banks that prevent it from connecting with the floodplain, and the AMA stretch is no exception. But there is the possibility of a habitat improvement project in the future, and meanwhile, you can fish here! The trout population is not high, but I can testify that there are some big ones. Kevin Stauffer of the Lake City DNR office told us that brown trout reproduction has been on the increase, and they may be able to stop stocking in the near future.

There is much work remaining to protect our streams in the heavily farmed country of Southeast Minnesota and Western Wisconsin, but we are blessed with good conservation partners such as TPL, engaged citizens who actually voted themselves a tax increase to create the Outdoor Heritage Fund, and, especially, enlightened landowners who are interested in conservation and willing to work with TU and its partners. At the dedication event, I had a chance to meet TPL's acting director Bob McGillivray. Bob told me that funding is currently available to purchase and protect heritage brook trout habitat in Southeast Minnesota—both in the riparian corridor and the surrounding uplands. If you know a landowner who may be interested, please get in touch with Bob at [Bob.McGillivray@tpl.org](mailto:Bob.McGillivray@tpl.org). And, next time you encounter a landowner, let them know how much you appreciate them!

TCTU is wrapping up its chapter meetings with a seminar on Tenkara on April 26th, and a lecture on how to be in the top 10% of Fly Anglers on May 24th. Chapter meetings are in-person and on Zoom, and everybody is welcome. You can find details on TCTU Chapter Meetings and other events on the Events page of our website: <https://www.twincitiestu.org/events.html>

## Iowa Driftless Chapter

By Mike Rogers President of Driftless Chapter



**EARTH DAY** (April 22nd 9am-Noon @ Community Building on Winneshiek County Fairgrounds)-- **looking for 1 or 2 more potential volunteers to help represent our chapter at a booth during Earth Day in Decorah this month.** This will be fairly laid back, and we have all the booth items our volunteers will need to showcase our efforts. Setup for the event that day will open at 7:30am, and further details can be discussed for those who might be available and interested.

**FREE FISHING WEEKEND** put on by Decorah Parks and Rec (**June 4-6** with an emphasis on volunteers for Friday, June 4) --looking for several (**10-15** would be ideal) volunteers to assist Decorah Parks and Rec during Free Fishing Weekend. The day would likely consist of teaching all aspects of trout fishing (fly fishing or spin rod) to participants. If you would like more details, please let me know and we can chat. For now, it is important that we get a solid number of firm volunteers so that we can notify the Parks and Rec dept. as they are reliant on our help in order for this to happen at all. I would hate for this event to fall through due to lack of help, and after being on hold the past couple of years due to Covid, it would be great to have once again.

**LUTHER FLY FISHING CLASS**-- we will need **3-5 volunteers for each of the following dates** to assist the Luther College students as they visit local streams and learn the basics of fly fishing. This semester, there are 10 students enrolled in the course, and it would be great if we could have 1 chapter volunteer per 2 to 3 students. Roger, the course instructor, his students and our volunteers will meet at the Centennial Union on the Luther College campus at 2:45pm and head out fishing until 5:30pm on each of the following dates (all Mondays and Wednesdays) at the stream that is chosen for that day. If interested, please reach out to me at [tuiadriftless@gmail.com](mailto:tuiadriftless@gmail.com) to inquire about any of these dates that might work:

- \*Monday April 24**
- \*Wednesday April 26**
- \*Monday May 1**
- \*Wednesday May 3**
- \*Monday May 8**
- \*Wednesday May 10**

**CHAPTER FUNDRAISER/BANQUET (F3T EVENT)** (April 29th @ Hotel Winneshiek) -- we are still looking for a few more volunteers to help out during the fundraiser event at the end of the month. Volunteer positions we are still looking for would likely be front desk attendees (supervise check-in/ticket redemptions, distribute name tags) and also a few volunteers to patrol the event space and sell raffle tickets. Any help in setup/cleanup the day and night of the event will also be gratefully welcomed.

## TCTU's 'Foster the Outdoors Flyfishing' Program

By Amber Taylor - MNTU Education Program Supervisor

Connecting Minnesota families to the outdoors through Fly Fishing with a Volunteer Mentor

- Trout Unlimited offers Minnesota families this exciting program, fly-fishing with a volunteer mentor for an entire year!
- Youth age: 11-16 and one parent/guardian
- Trout Unlimited provides 2 fly-rods for each family to borrow for the year.

Schedule:

**May 20, 2023, 10AM-2PM**– Group event where you will meet your mentor and get a chance to catch your first fish on a fly rod at a metro area lake, location to be announced...

**Summer 2023** – Spend the summer fishing for a variety of species with your volunteer mentor.

**Oct 2023** – Group meeting -learn how to tie your own flies.

**Jan 2024** – Group meeting -tour of a local fly shop.

**March 2024** – Free admission to the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo, plus more...

**April 2024** – Final Group outing to a local trout stream

This program is 100% volunteer run and absolutely free of charge. All locations and dates will be confirmed via email. Contact us via phone or email with questions. Please email us with Name, Age and Contact Information to register.

**Registration Extended -April 22, 2023**

Contact: Kevin Wier 612-867-5768 or Rich Femling 763-807-5878 or email at: [fostertheoutdoors@hotmail.com](mailto:fostertheoutdoors@hotmail.com)

Kevin Wier is one of the volunteers that coordinates TCTU's Foster the Outdoors program. Kevin was also able to secure a committed mentor in the Rochester area and that means we need a pair of mentees to connect with them! If you wish to help, please contact Kevin.

# Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota

By Sally Noll, Chair FFWNMN



Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota has steadily grown since 1991 when there were 51 members. We have more than doubled our membership and in 2023 our member list on Facebook totaled 128 members. We are the largest women’s fly fishing club in the state of Minnesota. We have a 9-member board which works hard at organizing events for fishing and social activities. In 2022, we became affiliated with the Fly Fishers International Women Connect.

Our club goal is to help women learn about fly fishing and feel confident on the water. Our activities & programs support this goal with fly fishing excursions, education, and member meet ups. Membership in the club is required for participation in events. We also work with other groups to introduce women to the sport of fly fishing. To learn more about the club and upcoming events, please visit the website at <https://flyfishingwomenmn.com/>

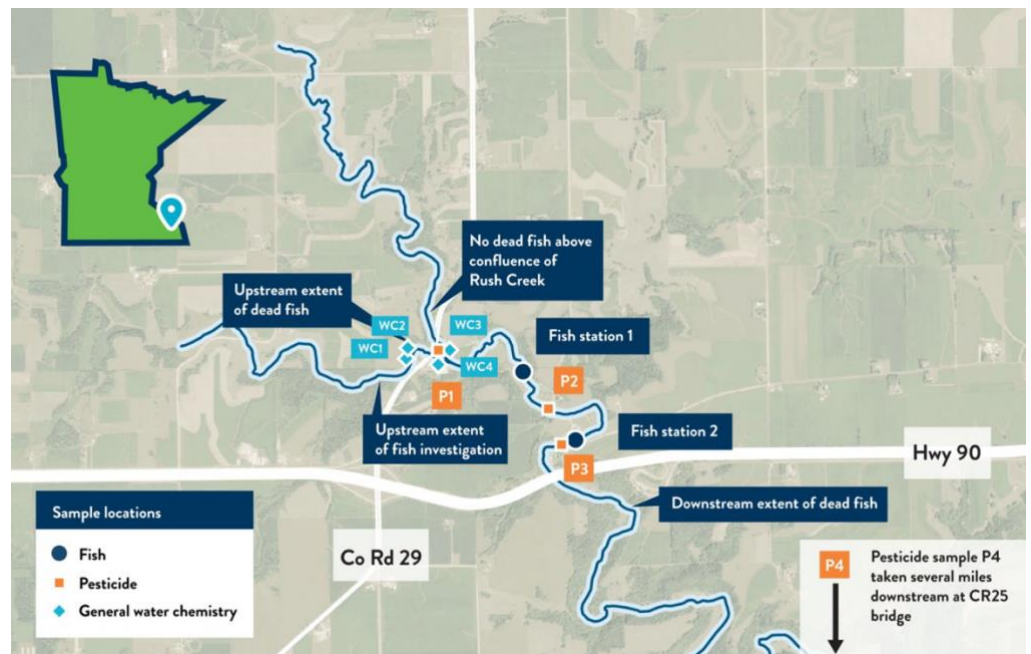
One of our most recent club activities was the participation in the Great Waters Expo (<https://greatwatersflyexpo.com/>, Saint Paul, Minnesota) with a club booth and hosting a Friday night social for anyone wishing to attend. We had 20+ volunteers staffing the booth during the weekend event and greeting women interested in the club and answering questions about the club. We also had many men stopping by with comments such as “great to see women on the water” or stories about taking their daughters fishing with them. One of the hits at the booth was a “fish” Plinko game that both adults and kids liked to play. Prizes - Swedish fish candy and fish stickers of course. A planning committee worked hard to plan the “Fly by Night” social gathering. The social drew a large crowd for an evening of socializing, prize drawings and a silent auction. We would like to thank all the great people and groups that donated items for use in the auction and prize drawings as well as all of the volunteers that worked on the event.

## MPCA: 2023 Rush Creek Fish Kill Final Report Results

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has issued their report on the Rush Creek fish kill from last summer.

This wasn't the first fish kill and won't be the last. Low water + manure + heavy rain is said to be the recipe behind this kill.

Read their 8 page report here [MPCA Fish Kill Report](#).





## Training for Volunteer Stream Monitors

By Caroline van Schaik: Driftless Area Coordinator, MN Izaak Walton League

A hands-on workshop on how to monitor your local stream is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 2023, at St. Mary's University in Winona, MN. The free course will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and include classroom and streamside sessions. To register, please contact Caroline van Schaik, [caroline.ikesumri@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.ikesumri@gmail.com). Children younger than 17 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

The workshop is a project of the Winona Will Dilg chapter of the Izaak Walton League (IWLA) and the league's Upper Mississippi River Initiative (UMRI) in partnership with local certified Save Our Stream (SOS) volunteers.

Sign in will start at 8:30 a.m. in St. Mary's University Adducci Science Center - watch for SOS signs from the building's parking lot. There will be a break for lunch - the campus cafeteria will be open and there is a patio if you choose to bring your own. Mud boots or waders are recommended; participants should come dressed for the weather. This workshop qualifies as part of SOS certification, which includes additional online components.

The SOS program was designed 50 years ago by the IWLA as a way to engage people across the country in water quality issues. It has since expanded to include Salt Watch and Nitrate Watch components. The local IWLA chapter with UMRI monitor eight sites in the Driftless region.

Details on SOS certification are here: <https://www.iwla.org/water/stream-monitoring/upcoming-water-monitoring-workshops/save-our-streams-certification>.

## Lawns to Legumes Assistance

By Carl Berberich, Editor

Sara Strassman, our TU DARE Program manager from La Crosse, WI, has found a Minnesota program that helps Minnesota landowners convert their lawns to prairie. The [website](#) states '*Minnesota residents are eligible to apply for Lawns to Legumes cost-share funding of up to \$350 to create pollinator habitat in their yards. Applications will be chosen through a randomized drawing, though priority will be given to projects within higher priority areas and to equitable geographic distribution.*'

Basically, the program Lawns to Legumes offers free resources for DIYers to learn how to plant pollinator-friendly gardens, meadows, lawns, trees, and shrubs. It also provides cost-share grants to help cover the costs of doing a project. The goal is to help people create habitats for at-risk species like the rusty patched bumble bee and the monarch butterfly.

But be aware that applying for Lawns to Legumes cost-share funding does not guarantee you will receive funding.

Lawns to Legumes provide many free helpful resources on creating pollinator habitat. You can check the [Lawns to Legumes page](#) and the [Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources website](#) for specific project information.



## Fly of The Month: Perdi-Smurf

By Lance Prado, HTU Board member

The Perdi-Smurf was developed at Root River Rod Co as an attractor fly and is great as a dropper. This fly fishes great under a indicator and or tight lined. All materials are available in store or online and are listed below. Check out more at [Rootriverrodco.com](http://Rootriverrodco.com)

**Hook:** Umpqua XC210bl Perdi Jig size 16

**Bead:** White 2.8mm slotted tungsten

**Thread:** Semperfli 12/0 Cornflower

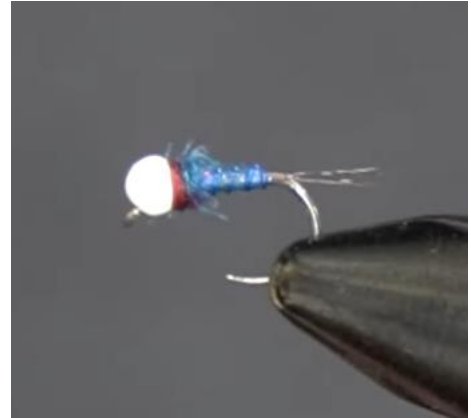
**Rib:** Size small blue wire

**Flash:** Semperfli Perdigon body

**Dubbing:** Hareline Ice Dubbing Smurf

**Collar:** Semperfli 12/0 Red

[Perdi-Smurf Fly pattern](#)



## Monthly Fishing Report

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

Southeast MN has received heavy rain on 4/19 and has dirtied up quite a few streams. Prior to the rain fishing was excellent. Fish were aggressively taking BWO's and Caddis on many different streams. Size 18 BWO's and size 18 Grey caddis were the tickets. Nymphing was also fantastic using a pattern called the Perdi-Smurf developed at Root River Rod Co. Soft hackles such as Partridge have been great for swinging before hatches. Now since the rain using small leech patterns size 12-8 have been great dead drifting them or swinging them in dirty water. Fishing smaller creeks and closer to the springs is going to be your best bet for find clear water. As always feel free to call Root River Rod Co for more information and don't forget to check out our website for flies and gear.



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

As winter comes to a close, it seems like we went straight into Summer for about a week there and just missed Spring altogether. BWO hatches remained consistent, and we even saw brief showings of caddis in the air--many anglers were able to take advantage of them on Elk Hair Caddis patterns size 16-18. BWOs dries from 18-22 have still been working during hatches with others being had on similar size Adam's. Caddis droppers could be a great choice any day moving forward, with a small nymph or even emerger tagging along below the

surface. Similarly, dropper rigs with a heavier nymph below the indicator, followed by a smaller nymph or emerger trailing behind will also find fish.

**Nymphs**--> midges (zebra midge, tan midge (with red collar/hotspot too), red (blood) midge (size 16-20), pheasant tail patterns (size 14-18), prince nymph (red collar/hotspot also seems to be effective) (size 14-18), Higa's S.O.S. (size 14-18), caddis larva (size 16-20)

**Emergers**--> partridge and orange have been successful, as well as other flashy caddis or mayfly emerger patterns. Olive and grey have been good choices, too and all of these would be best fished from sizes 16-20.

**Dry Fly**--> BWO patterns sizes 16-22, elk hairs caddis sizes 16-18, Adams and parachute Adams size 14-18

## **Upcoming Events Schedule:**

***Hiawatha Trout Unlimited Bamboo Rod Raffle:*** April 22, 2023 at 7:00 pm. At Sylvan Brewing in Lanesboro, MN.

***Iowa Driftless TU Chapter's Luther College's Fly Fishing Class*** April 24, 26, May 1, 3, 8, 10. See pg 6 for more details.

***TCTU Chapter meeting:*** April 26. Details at <https://www.twincitiestu.org/events.html>

***Win-Cres TU*** April 28 Goodhue school's trout fishing days: April 28 fishing near Rushford

***Iowa TU Driftless Chapter Banquet/Fundraiser:*** April 29, 2023 starting at 6:00 pm. At the Hotel Winneshiek Opera House in Decorah, IA.

***Hiawatha TU Members Meeting:*** May 1, 2023 - Melissa Wagner DNR

***Hiawatha TU Adopt-A-Highway Road Cleanup:*** May 8, 2023 at 5:30. Volunteers will meet at the Highway 52 rest stop alongside the Root River south of Chatfield.

***TCTU's 'Foster the Outdoors Flyfishing' Program:*** May 20 10AM-2PM. Details on pg 7.

***MN Izaak Walton League:*** Training for Volunteer Stream Monitors at St. Mary's University in Winona, MN on May 20, 9am to 2pm. To register, contact Caroline van Schaik, [caroline.ikesumri@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.ikesumri@gmail.com)

***Rochester's Century High School's TIC Trout Release:*** May 24 at Whitewater State Park with Bruce Frutiger. More details will follow.

## Resources:

[SE Stream Conditions](#) (MN DNR)

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

[Southeast Streams](#) (MN DNR)

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

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

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

[State Forest](#) (MN lands)

[Driftless 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's Iowa Driftless Stream Map](#)

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

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

[2023 MN DNR Driftless Stream Projects Map](#)

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