

Wild Rivers Tribune

WILD RIVERS CHAPTER



TROUT UNLIMITED



APRIL 2023

Chapter Report

By Kevin Seefeldt, Chapter President

So the biggest news is that our 2023 Fishing Expo and Auction is happening on April 8th at the Ponzio Center of Northland College in Ashland. Free and open to the public from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. This is our chapter's primary fundraiser and we have been without this event for the past three years. It's kind of a big deal!



Looking forward, we have several other activities coming up in 2023

- Fly and Lure making at the Family Fishing Expo @ Hayward Wesleyan

Church April 15th

- Brule River cleanup organized by BRSC April 29th at 9:00am at the pavilion in Brule
- Delta annual Highway H Cleanup on May 6th, 9:00am meet in the Delta Diner parking lot
- White River tree planting with WDNR in May
- Marengo River tree planting and BBQ with the Great Lakes TU team on May 20th at 9:00am
- Kids Fishing Day at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center on June 3rd at 9:00am
- Larson Landing Chapter Picnic on the Namekagon River July 12th at 6pm
- Brule River gathering October 2023, location to be determined

Also, this year John Simonson will be asking for volunteers for his Mayfly stream study. Watch our website and Facebook page for dates and more details.

Within our Chapter area we have partners working on vital habitat protections

- Landmark Conservancy is fundraising to Protect Plover Beach in partnership with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. With support from state and federal conservation partners, they are working to help purchase 192 acres including one-half mile of lake frontage near Port Wing. This property is one of the last large undeveloped parcels along the South Shore of Lake Superior and with its purchase, they will help protect coastal habitat and expand the Brule River State Forest.
- Sawyer Creek Springs in Shell Lake continues to draw attention. See the short explanation further in this newsletter. A new school forest committee is planning ways to bring it to the attention of the public. TU's support has been requested.
- Wisconsin Wetlands Association is working locally on natural flood management and road-stream crossing work in the Lake Superior Basin. They have asked the chapter for input and support as the plan moves forward.

Upcoming Meetings

Topic: WRTU April Business Meeting

Time: Apr 12, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87992711611?pwd=NlpUZStLcWFDT3VPRUNtQWVLUiBBdz09>

Meeting ID: 879 9271 1611

Passcode: 029804

or Dial by phone 1 312 626 6799

Topic: WRTU May Business Meeting

Time: May 10, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time (US & Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87077882457?pwd=Y0VqMjJEnBFYldqQWYrR3NSMGJyOT09>

Meeting ID: 870 7788 2457

Passcode: 855968

Or dial by phone 1 312 626 6799

Topic: WRTU June Business Meeting

Time: Jun 14, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time (US & Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84868477012?pwd=YnlHZIVVWE1TNUtkTFRCY0hoM2d0dz09>

Meeting ID: 848 6847 7012

Passcode: 001883

Or dial by phone 1 312 626 6799

- The Trust for Public Lands has asked our chapter to support the acquisition, permanent protection, and public ownership of the proposed 311-acre Black River Project, as an expansion of the existing Douglas County Forest just south of Pattison State Park. The Project would become an integral part of a 50-mile, contiguous, conserved N-S wildlife corridor and 1.3 miles of Black River itself (an important trout river), 0.5 miles of tributary creeks, 63 acres of wetlands, and 246 acres of intact upland forests.
- Burnett County Land Services Department is applying for a Wisconsin DNR Surface Water Grant to identify stream crossings impairments, blockages, incorrect sizing, invasive species and more. They have asked our chapter to support their application. Burnett County has roughly 30 Class 1 Trout Streams and hopes to identify impairments and use that information to move forward with seeking partnerships to take corrective actions.

So now I will conclude with this: the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited needs YOU! To continue and expand our TU work locally, we need more member involvement. If you are willing to hold a position on our Board, join a workday, or contribute financially for our chapter's work, please reach out to us. There is so much great work to be done. But it takes all of us.

See you at the Expo!

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting (virtual meeting) of the Board of Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

• Chapter Members Present:

Alan Brew, Bill Heart, Bob Traczyk, Dan Bloomquist, Frank Pratt, Ken Benoit, Kevin Seefeldt, John Simonson.

• Treasurer's Report

*February Treasurer's report was submitted by Bob on March 3rd, 2023, and confirmed by Alan on March 8th, 2023.

*Frank Pratt moves approval of the treasurer's report, and Ken seconds. All approved.

*Kevin moves a \$115 payment for a Bottom Line News ad in early April for the Expo, seconded by Frank. All approved.

*Expo Expenses—new caps (\$275) and fly-tying books (\$253) have been ordered.

*Bob moves approval of bill payment; Frank second, all approved.

*TU Membership for Weston Thier (\$17.50)—Weston will provide a guided trip for the Expo

*Frank moved payment of Weston's membership, Kevin seconded.

*Creation of PayPal account and donate button on our website (no cost to do this).

*This will be an account that will require regular reporting.

*We need to make sure that at least two people have account access.

Record of monthly activity time—some entered, others will enter their own time.

• Expo Planning

*Pre-Exo planning session scheduled for Sunday, March 12, at 1:00 p.m. at John Simonson's place.

*Dan Bloomquist is working on the food.

• 2023 Calendar of Events

*Will have a handout at the Expo.

*Kevin will send around a summary of currently planned events, so Board members can add.

*Bioassessment and stream exploring: John has been in communication with the counties and they are in the process of applying for funding. Once they hear back they will know more about what needs they may have.

*Discussed option of adding a second Namekagon River event in May or June to capture more people who are in the area for the fishing during those months.

• Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

• Next Meeting:

April 12th at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Wild Rivers Allocated Funds

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Date	Trout Restoration Ashland	NE Regional Pledges	Chapter Fly Rods	Expo Cert	Unallocated
2	1/30/2022	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 5,787.52
3	2/28/2022	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 218.65	\$ 600.00	\$ 5,022.99
4	3/31/2022	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 4,232.55
5	5/31/2022	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 4,722.53
6	6/30/2022	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 4,236.53
7	7/31/2022	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 3,890.47
8	8/31/2022	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 3,732.32
9	9/30/2022	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 3,682.32
10	10/31/2022	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 3,564.92
11	12/1/2022	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 4,114.92
12	1/1/2023	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 3,139.76
13	1/31/2023	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 200.00	\$ 3,208.76
14	2/8/2023	\$ 25,000.00	Board Approval			\$ 5,208.76
15	2/28/2023	\$ 25,000.00				\$ 3,085.56

7:17 AM
03/03/23

Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited Reconciliation Detail Checking, Period Ending 02/28/2023

Type	Date	Num	Name	Cir	Amount	Balance
Beginning Balance						30,643.76
Cleared Transactions						
Checks and Payments - 11 Items						
Check	01/28/2023	1711	Ken. Benoit	X	-200.00	-200.00
Check	01/28/2023	1712	Trout Unlimited	X	-35.00	-235.00
Check	02/02/2023	1713	Heart Graphics	X	-253.20	-488.20
Check	02/07/2023	1714	Heart Graphics	X	-275.00	-763.20
Check	02/07/2023	1715	Northland Media LLC	X	-115.00	-878.20
Check	02/07/2023		Wis Dept of Admin ...	X	-51.00	-929.20
Check	02/10/2023	1716	Anglers All	X	-200.00	-1,129.20
Check	02/11/2023	1718	Wild Rivers Conserv...	X	-500.00	-1,629.20
Check	02/13/2023		Trout Unlimited	X	-155.00	-1,784.20
Check	02/18/2023		GoDaddy.com	X	-10.17	-1,794.37
Check	02/19/2023	1719	John. Simonson	X	-268.20	-2,062.57
Total Checks and Payments					-2,062.57	-2,062.57
Deposits and Credits - 1 Item						
Deposit	02/21/2023			X	4.37	4.37
Total Deposits and Credits					4.37	4.37
Total Cleared Transactions					-2,058.20	-2,058.20
Cleared Balance						28,585.56
Uncleared Transactions						
Checks and Payments - 1 Item						
Check	02/11/2023	1717	Landmark Conserva...		-500.00	-500.00
Total Checks and Payments					-500.00	-500.00
Total Uncleared Transactions					-500.00	-500.00
Register Balance as of 02/28/2023					-2,558.20	28,085.56
Ending Balance					-2,558.20	28,085.56

Kids Fishing Day Coming Up

By Susan Nelson, Kids Fishing Day Event Coordinator

Make a difference in a kid's life and support the Annual Kids Fishing Day on Saturday, June 3, 2023 at the David R. Obey Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. Last year there were 279 participants, 33 sponsors, 42 volunteers, lots of displays, and many teachable moments. Families registered on Eventbrite and group size was limited to 15 per 10-minute rotation to keep everyone safe. The event was held outside, and masks were optional, but some wore them. We intend to run this year's event much the same.

The focus this year is to promote lead-free terminal tackle options again. By doing this, we hope to instill in participants the need to protect our shared aquatic environments from the damaging impacts of lead tackle on loons, ducks, and other aquatic life. LoonWatch will be here to staff a teaching station and hand out packets of lead-free hooks and weights. We hope this will create a demand in local bait shops for lead-free tackle options and in turn make a difference in our Lake Superior watersheds.

We also wish to continue providing volunteer caps. It's a nice reward for all who donate their time, skills, and knowledge of fishing to the event. It's unfortunately become increasingly difficult to purchase this item. The caps are important and serve to identify volunteers in charge. They also provide protection from flying hooks and casting plugs at the pond and casting practice areas. Any donations toward the caps would be greatly appreciated!

Lastly, we invite Wild Rivers Chapter members to participate in the event and help kids cast and catch fish at the pond. We couldn't do this event without TU volunteers helping each year. If you can help or have questions about the 2023 event, please don't hesitate to reach out by phone at 715-685-2644 or email susan.nelson@usda.gov

Are Mayflies Declining?

By John Simonson, john@wiflyfisher.com

All over the country fly fishermen are starting to talk about the mayfly hatches are not what they used to be. The mighty Hendrickson hatch that so many love to start their season has been declining in many southern regions of Wisconsin. On some streams in southern Wisconsin the Hendrickson nymphs are totally gone, as well as other mayfly species.

This is not the case in the Wild Rivers Trout Unlimited Chapter's region. We still enjoy a wonderful Hendrickson hatch on many streams. In northwest Wisconsin with all the federal, state, and county public lands has helped reduce the effects of human influence and keep our streams healthy. Although this sounds great, we cannot take it for granted.

I am sure most of you remember the 2016 and 2018 thousand-year floods in northwest Wisconsin. Many streams were blown out and bridges were destroyed. In some Northwoods areas the floods did major damage to the stream banks and washed clay and other sediments into our coldwater trout streams. Add to this the warming of our climate which also has influenced our coldwater streams and rivers. Some of our streams flow through farmlands and private property where sediment and harmful chemicals entering our streams are slowly deteriorating the health of our coldwater trout streams.

So, what can we do?

Mayfly, caddisfly, and stonefly larvae are the "Canaries in the Coal Mine". Scientists have proven across the state and around the World that aquatic insect's diversity and density can be used to determine the health of a stream. Certain aquatic insect larvae, such as the Hendrickson (*Ephemerella subvaria*) nymph are not tolerant to organic pollution, while some other aquatic macroinvertebrates are extremely tolerant to organic pollution. Thus, we can use aquatic insect stream samplings to help monitor the health of our northwest Wisconsin streams and rivers.

I propose we do every other year, Spring and Fall, biomonitoring of the benthic macroinvertebrates on selected streams across our seven counties that Wild Rivers TU Chapter is responsible for. Over the Winter months I have reached out to the WDNR and the National Forest Service to obtain permits to do a diversity study of the mayfly and caddisfly larvae in Eighteen Mile Creek. Two UW scientists, Kurt Schmude and Tom Klubertanz have graciously agreed to identify the species I collect during the 2023 sampling. Eighteen Mile Creek is a pristine class I trout stream that flows through the Chequamegon National Forest as well as WDNR state land and Bayfield County land for 18 miles before entering Long Lake Branch Creek which flows in the White River. The data collected will then go into Wisconsin's SWIMS database.

The Eighteen Mile Creek stream macroinvertebrate project is funded by me, with the help of the two UW scientists who are volunteering their time. In order to do more samplings like this across our seven counties will take donations from WRTU members, and hopefully contributions from other conservation organizations. WRTU chapter aquatic insect studies will establish a baseline using science and real stream data, rather than guessing. This will alert us to changes in the health of our coldwater streams, and along with the WDNR's county biologists establish procedures to hopefully correct the issues before it is too late.



Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Conserving and protecting the waters in Northwest Wisconsin

WRTU EXPO 2023
APRIL 8, 2023

At Northland College's Ponzio Campus Center in Ashland, Wisconsin

Free to The Public

Saturday April 8th, 2023 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Come Talk to The Experts

Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Biologists
Iron River National Fish Hatchery
Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge
DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist
Landmark Conservancy
US Forest Service
Great Lakes Visitor Center
Red Cliff Tribal Fisheries
Superior Rivers Watershed Association

Lake Superior Collaborative
LoonWatch
Communities United by Water
League of Women Voters
Veterans on the Fly
River Alliance of Wisconsin
Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country
Trail Association
Trout Unlimited Great Lakes Program

Event Schedule

- **2:00 pm - Ian Harding will present Coaster Brook Trout Rehabilitation in the Wisconsin Waters of Lake Superior**
- **3:00 pm - Tenkara Fishing demo by Jeff Butler & Melis Arik**
- **4:00 pm – WRTU Live Auction**

Many fishing items will be auctioned off
Raffling a donated Mohawk Solo 13 Canoe

Your support helps fund our cold-water watershed projects for 2023

Reaction to Proposed RV Park on the Namekagon River

Following is the text of an email written by Stu Neville of Hayward Fly Fishing Co. to the Washburn County Zoning Committee regarding the proposal to develop an RV park at Heartwood Resort. Heartwood Resort is located on the lower Namekagon adjacent to Howell Landing, near Trego, about 17 miles above the Namekagon's confluence with the St. Croix.

To the members of the zoning committee of Washburn County,

I'm writing to urge you to oppose the authorization of a conditional use permit for a large RV park at Heartwood Resort. The reasons to oppose this project are many, and I'll elaborate below.

The Wild and Scenic Riverway of the Namekagon provides invaluable contributions to Washburn County and ALL of northwest Wisconsin. As the owner of a local business that operates in the community and on the river, I can say with certainty that my clients travel from far and wide specifically to enjoy the wild, uninterrupted beauty of the Namekagon River. This river, as you may know, was among the first in the country to be federally designated Wild and Scenic—a tremendous recognition of its outstanding beauty and wildness—and it's that same character that keeps my fly shop and outfitting business thriving. As people of influence in Washburn County, it's your responsibility to be considerate stewards of this precious and rare national resource. The Namekagon River is for everyone, not just adjacent landowners looking for personal financial gain at the expense of the river's wild essence.

This land owner applying for the permit has also shown a flagrant disregard for the rights and property of the National Scenic Riverway as recently as last year, when they cut an illegal trail from their property to the river and created their own landing, complete with dock and life jacket/boat storage, all without permission from the National Park Service. To think that sort of abuse of Park Service lands and resources wouldn't happen again with additional hundreds of people so close to the river would be ignorant. Along with highly concentrated populations also come issues like noise pollution, air pollution, water pollution, light pollution, and erosion, all of which spoil the intentionally protected quality of the riverway. Also worthy of consideration is that the damage done by creating this RV park would be irreversible.

The location of this proposed RV park is also foolish from a practicality and safety standpoint. To think that an additional seasonal population of several hundred people won't rely on local emergency service vehicles and personnel is unrealistic, and access to this proposed site is extremely limited. Response time to people in need would be slow due to access issues and remoteness. The quality of the limited roads would degrade quickly and significantly under the stress and wear of hundreds of large vehicles and increased ATV traffic, and many of these road maintenance costs would be borne by the taxpayers of Washburn County and local townships, not the seasonal RV park patrons causing the damage.

This is an opportunity to stand up for one of your county's greatest assets and resources. I again urge you to oppose the authorization of this conditional use permit. Future generations will be grateful.

Thank you for taking the time to read my message, and all messages that come before you on this subject.
Respectfully, Stu Neville



For more on the issue, see: <https://www.stcroix360.com/2023/03/rv-park-proposal-on-namekagon-raises-risks-of-river-impacts/>

Update on Sawyer Creek Springs

By Philip Sylla

The City of Shell Lake owns three city lots deeded to the City by Shell Lake Lumber Company in 1901 for the symbolic price of \$1.00. The deed is restricted, limiting use of the lots to a park.

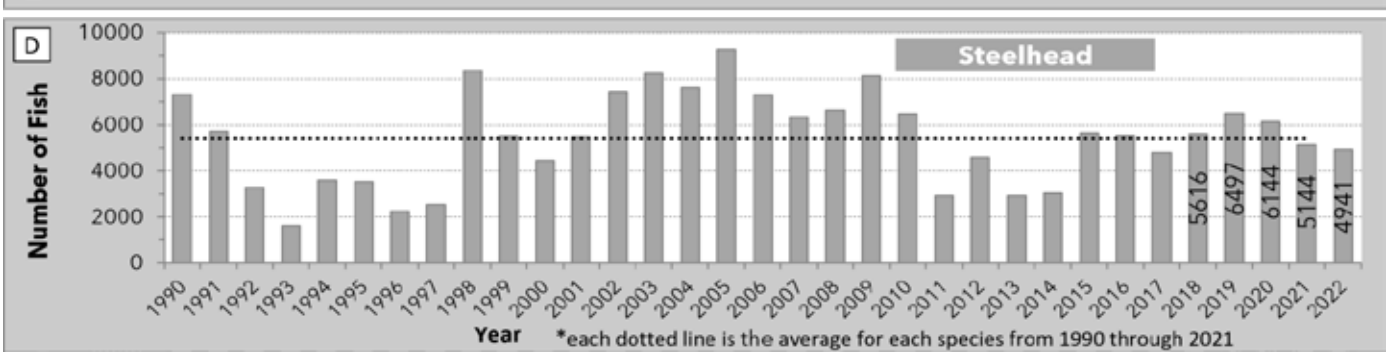
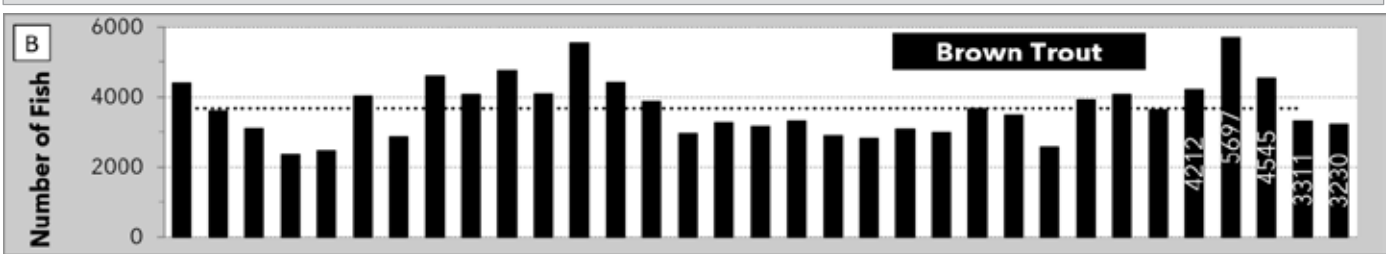
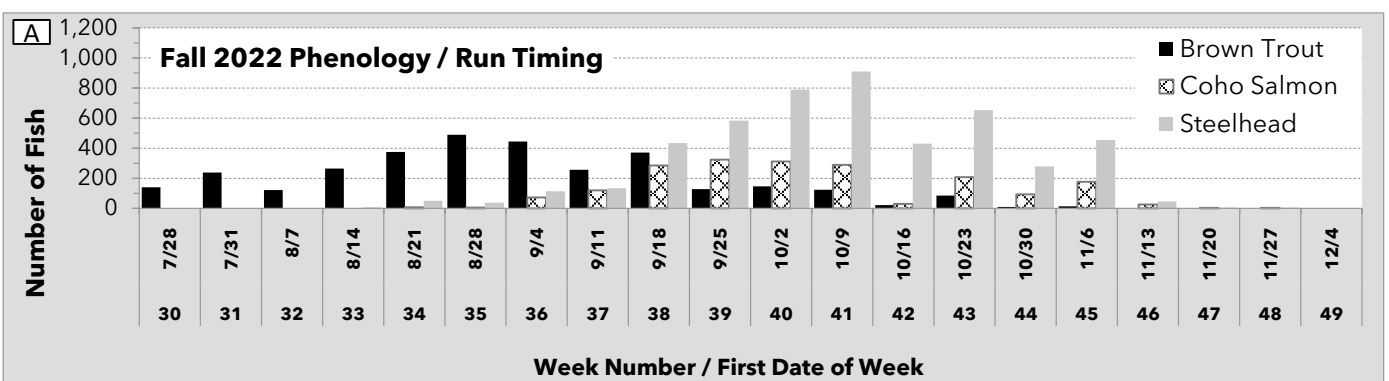
The scenic, steep lots have remained vacant since then. They are partially forested and partially grassy, and once held what was reputedly the largest sugar maple in Wisconsin. Two of the lots are zoned residential and one zoned conservation. They drain steeply into Sawyer Creek Springs, and are adjacent to the school forest which contains the springs. The springs themselves are the source of Sawyer Creek, a Class 1 Trout Stream, Outstanding Resource Water, and tributary of the Yellow which flows into the federally protected St. Croix River. In 2022 a businessman asked the City to sell him the lots so he could build a parking lot for his business. The City Council and Planning Commission voted to sell the lots, but the sale will be brought back to the Planning Commission for reconsideration in May, 2023.



2022 BOIS BRULE RIVER FALL FISHWAY UPDATE

Brown Trout	Chinook Salmon	Coho Salmon	Fall Run Steelhead	Brook Trout	Pink Salmon	Splake
3,230	339	1,951	4,941	0	17	13

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) video-monitored trout and salmon migration at the fishway from July through early December. [Chart A](#) shows the phenology (i.e., migration/run timing) of the lower river's three most common lake-run trout and salmon species. Low river flows and marginal rainfall were the most observable environmental conditions during the run. Though low flows may have influenced the overall numbers, all species maintained their typical migration patterns according to seasonally decreasing water temperatures and photoperiod (daylight duration). However, relatively abrupt increases in water temperature and river flows later in the season drew numerous individuals. Most Steelhead (56 percent) ranged from 20 to 25-inches long while 9 percent measured 12 to 17-inches long. Coho Salmon generally ranged from 19 to 22-inches long, though larger fish measured 26 inches long. One Chinook Salmon was 37 inches long. Nearly 70 percent of Brown Trout were 18 to 24-inches long. [Charts B, C, and D](#) show fall 2022 numbers relative to previous fall numbers and the variability within these self-sustaining populations.



Squirrel Tail Spruce Streamer

— By Bob Traczyk

Materials:

Hook: Size 8 to 4 3XL Streamer

Thread: Black 140 denier

Tail: Peacock Herl

Abdomen: Red Floss

Rib: Fine copper wire

Thorax: Peacock Herl

Hackle: Brown

Wing: Squirrel Tail Hair



Step 1

Step #1 – Load a spool of red floss onto a bobbin and wrap floss starting at the halfway mark back to the hook bend. Tie in the copper wire rib.



Step 2

Step #2 – Tie in 5 or 6 strands of herl along the hook shank right on top of the red floss, leaving a small portion for the tail in the back and leave a good portion in front of the red floss.



Step 3

Step #3 – Trim the herl tail the length of the hook gap, wrap the front herl around the hook shank to build the thorax, wrap the copper rib up to the red floss bobbin and trim the wire; do a couple of half hitches with the red floss bobbin and cut the floss.



Step 4

Step #4 – Start the black thread on the hook shank and tie in the hackle 3-4 wraps.



Step 5

Step #5 – Tie in the squirrel tail hair so that the tips of the hair end just about at the end of the peacock herl tail. When tying in the squirrel hair start near the thorax and lift three-quarters of the hair vertically and wrap the bobbin thread through once or twice then pull forward. Continue this thread wrap and pull technique to spread the squirrel hair out in a wide fashion.

Winter Stoneflies

By John Simonson, john@wiflyfisher.com

With Wisconsin's early catch & release inland trout season fly fishermen have an opportunity to fish dry flies to rising trout. Across northern Wisconsin we have several different Winter stoneflies that hatch while there is still snow and icy stream banks.

Like all our northern freestone stoneflies, the winter stoneflies crawl out of the river across snow and icy banks to hatch and mate. Depending on weather and temperatures the female stoneflies will go back to the river to lay their eggs. The females twittering across the surface to lay their eggs often gets trout to rise and give us our first dry fly opportunity. The first Winter stonefly to emerge is usually a small black stonefly we often call the Early Black Stonefly. This little stonefly is in the Family Capniidae, genus *Allocapnia* Sp. As you read this article, they are already emerging on many of our local freestone streams. These small stonefly nymphs are slender and about a size #16, while the small black skittering female adults are about a size #18.

Eventually intermix with the small black stoneflies two slightly larger stoneflies will start to emerge from the stonefly Family Taeniopterygidae. One we often call the Early Brown Stonefly (*Strophopteryx fasciata*) and the other the Early Black Stonefly (*Taeniopteryx nivalis*). From a fly fisherman's viewpoint names don't really matter. The stoneflies adults are generally a size #14 with a little longer extended wing, or a size #12 with the wing extended slightly longer. Again, during ovipositing the females will be seen skittering and twitching across the surface.

These Winter stonefly families are all listed as slightly more tolerant to organic pollution than most of the larger stonefly families that hatch on our northern streams during the Spring through the Fall.

For Winter Stonefly nymph patterns keep your imitations slender and fish them along the bottom towards the banks and around rocks in the river. Fly patterns to imitate the skittering adults seem to be all over the place. I have had guys tell me they had success with a Parachute Adams, CDC & Elk, Elk Hair Caddis, X-Caddis and several others. Personally, I find the key to getting trout to take my fly pattern is skittering and twitching it across the surface where I saw a trout previously rise. Note: I have also seen northern Wisconsin Family Biotic Index (FBI) studies that list the Family Nemouridae, which is another winter stonefly.



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See Our Facebook Page
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