

Wild Rivers Tribune

WILD RIVERS CHAPTER



TROUT UNLIMITED



APRIL 2024

Chapter Report

By John Simonson, Chapter President

This definitely has been a bizarre Winter/Spring. I can never remember a milder Winter like this past one. Finally, the winds shifted, and Winter briefly returned. Our early inland trout season was great for us, but hopefully even great for the survival of our wild trout. Now we need more moisture to fill our creeks, rivers, swamps, and wetlands.



Our early season focus has been on our WRTU Chapter Expo. We made a bold move and shifted the event to Flat Creek Lodge in Hayward, Wisconsin. The reason behind this move was when I mapped out all our 284

WRTU members across the seven counties, it became evident to the WRTU Board members that we need to try holding the Expo in other locations. It turned out to be the right decision. I personally thank all the efforts of our WRTU Board members, conservation exhibitors, speakers, manufacturers' sales reps, and all the wonderful attendees.

This past February we had a Zoom meeting with Nate Thomas (WI-DNR fishery biologist) who discussed his White River Creel Survey for 2024 – 2025. To keep costs down, the WI-DNR has purchased several trail cameras. The cost was \$9,000 and WRTU Chapter donated half of the cost (\$4,500). The WI-DNR creel survey signage includes the WRTU Chapter logo. It will be interesting to see how many fishermen will go up to the cameras along various access points on the White River and briefly give your fish catch report. Please help the WI-DNR with your reporting.

Last, I want to mention WRTU Chapter is looking into youth and women fly casting outings with the help of Larry Mann and Wendy Williamson. Our future depends on getting more young adults and women involved in our chapter. Also, with Jeff Butler's help we are planning to do events for our veterans in northwest Wisconsin. If you know of any veterans that would be interested in helping or should be attending, please let Jeff Butler know (mojofishn1@gmail.com).

Email Address Needed. From time to time, we send an email announcement to our Wild River TU Chapter members letting them know about an upcoming event that is happening soon, also as a reminder. We have approximately 80 WRTU chapter members that we have no email address for. If you want to receive these email announcements, please send me an email – john@wiflyfisher.com.

We send these emails only to our chapter members and this does not go to National TU.

WRTU Member Volunteers Needed. On June 1st, Kids Fishing Day at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor, we need volunteers! This is the 24th Annual Kids Day Event, which was started by Susan Nelson (Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Service), Jeff Carlson and William Heart. Bill Heart is the lead person for this event again this year for our WRTU Chapter.

Upcoming WRTU Chapter Events

April 27 – BRSC Spring Cleanup - meet at 9AM at the Brule Pavilion (if rainout, postponed until May 11th)

May (date TBD) – Ashland High School Students fishing with the flies they tied.

May 10-12 - North Pikes Creek Tree Planting Weekend

May 18 – SRWA Event - 20 Mile Creek: A Case Study in Watershed Restoration

June 1 – Kids Fishing Day at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center

July 13 – WRTU Chapter Annual Summer Gathering – 1:00 – 4:00pm at Silverthorn Park, HWY 63, Seeley.

Fly Casting; Meet & Greet; Brats, Hamburgers & Refreshments.

August 17 – Family Fun Day at the Brule River Fish Hatchery

*** WRTU Chapter is also working on a Youth Fly Casting outings, Women Fly Casting & Fishing programs, Rivers of Recovery participation, WRTU Chapter Veteran Program, and Removal of Buckthorn along the South Fork of the White River.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the February 15, 2024 meeting (virtual meeting) of the Board of Directors of the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

• **Chapter Members Present:** Traczyk, Seefeldt, Mann, Butler, Benoit, Pratt, Simonson, and Nate Thomas

Meeting started with Nate Thomas WDNR Fishery biologist discussion on the White River Creel Project.

White River Creel Survey 2024/25

Methods

• Locations

- Pike River Rd
- White River Rd (Kern)
- White River Rd (Bolen)
- Sutherlands
- Goldbergs
- Bibon Rd Bridge

• Kiosk (voluntary reporting)

- Questions (metric)
 - Date (% season pressure comparable to historic)
 - Hours fished (effort, not comparable)
 - Age/Gender? (% by groups comparable to historic)
 - Zip code of primary address (where anglers are coming from, comparable?)
 - Primary type of angling and how (% type and how comparable to historic)
 - Species targeted (% of total time comparable to historic)
 - Brown Trout caught/harvested (not comparable, but % all fish caught is (relative))
 - Brook Trout caught/harvested (not comparable, but % all fish caught is (relative))

Web cam kiosks with postcards are going to be done in 2024. Fish will be fin clipped. Kiosks will be metal boxes on posts and signage will include the Wild Rivers TU Logo.

Nate Thomas said the project is \$9,000. He is asking us to donate \$6,000. Simonson will follow up to see about splitting costs (\$4,500 each - DNR & WRTU Chapter). Have answer before next meeting.

• **Treasurer's Report:** by Traczyk, Motion to accept by Seefeldt 2nd Benoit. Motion Carried

• **Expo planning:** \$250 check for the Flat Creek has been paid. Simonson has emailed us the exhibitors list and contacted all potential exhibitors via email. Jeff Currier-renowned artist/ fly fisherman will be attending our fly tying. Donations for the Expo from Dave Gellatly. Seefeldt will pick up donated fly fishing products from Dave Gellatly and Angler's All.

Simonson will get stuff from HFFC, will stop at St. Croix rods to talk to them,

has the Scott Allen's T&T fly rod.

Larry Mann has guide trip from Wendy, Amiker in Driftless, Jacobs Drift boat, Dave Kumlien (Montana) has offered a 1 day trip, large FF package from SA, dozen deer hair bugs, Umpqua, Lamson reel, Orvis bag from Viroqua.

Benoit talked to Matt at Superior Fly about donating something.

Butler has stuff coming from Blaine MN and others. Butler will be donating 2 fly rods of his own.

Simonson is donating a fly rod and flies.

Pratt will be bringing 10 buckets related to the rod r shed.

Melis has stuff from Arrowhead fly fishers.

Advertising for Expo \$117 with Bottom Line Newspaper. Larry will talk to the Hayward radio station. WOJB. We have to be a member of Hayward Chamber of Commerce for them to promote our Expo, but maybe we can collaborate with HFFC.

3 possible Expo presenters from 12:30 to 3, Jeremiah with DNR strategic plans; NPS will do something on mussels; Scott Allen TU chair- citizen volunteer help. Simonson will coordinate and will have a handout itinerary for everyone who enters the Expo. Jeff Butler-- ask potential new members if they are Veterans. Expo signage- we may need more.

Seefeldt made motion to authorize President Simonson to spend up to \$500 for Expo promotional materials 2nd by Mann approved.

Fly tying rally on March 9th at the Sawmill Saloon in Seeley.

Board Members check your Email for WRTU logo shirts and logo hats.

\$73 for a logo shirt. A minimum of 6 shirts has to be ordered. Twill hats with WRTU logo, minimum order is 12. The board has approved the aforementioned items with no additional costs to the chapter. Sales will be pre-ordered.

Duke is the auctioneer. And we will have a silent auction with minimum bid. Simonson wrote a letter to David Wahl and invited him to the Expo.

• **Projects coming this year:**

- White river,
- Add woody on upper Nam,
- National Forest work on some Johnson Springs, dam removal in 2025, then restore habitat.
- Outings - March fly tying
- Teach fly casting women and young adults.
- Larson Gathering
- Brule River Gathering,
- something near Ken Benoit.
- Butler - Veterans on the water with our own chapter.
- Kids Fishing Day at NGLVC in June will be organized by Bill Heart.
- Ken Benoit suggested a rod building class.
- Butler wants to teach about net building class to veterans.

• **Adjourn:** Mann 2nd by Pratt.

Distinguished Service Award 2024

By John Simonson

At the Feb 3, 2024 Wisconsin Trout Unlimited Banquet held in Oshkosh, Jeff Butler was the recipient of the TU Distinguished Service Award for his years of dedication helping our veterans. Jeff happened to be in the Bahamas with family, so he couldn't attend and receive the award. Since he couldn't attend the banquet, Scott Allen, the WI TU chair came to our WRTU Chapter Expo in Hayward and presented Jeff with the award.

I personally am in awe at all the time and effort, and energy Jeff has dedicated to helping his fellow veterans. Jeff has been doing this for over 30 years. He started many of the veteran programs and continues today helping his veterans in need. I know of no one who deserves this award more than Jeff Butler. Thank you, Jeff!!!



Introducing Knot Talk!

By Jon Wheeler

If you fish, you tie knots. The two go hand in hand. Knots attach flies to the ends of our lines. They attach tippet to our leaders... Knots are great. But it turns out, they are not all equally great.

There are dozens of fishing knots out there. What knots do you use? Why those? Are they easier or faster to tie? Stronger? Do they use up (waste) less line? Is your go-to knot what you grew up using?

I tied the same knot for almost five decades to attach everything to my line. I know it works as I've landed thousands of fish and pulled my gear off thousands of snags. But I started wondering how good was my knot? How did it compare with other knots I could be using instead?

To satisfy my curiosity, I put together a knot testing system I named Knot Broke. With it I can measure the breaking strength of lines, and knots. So, I've been testing, and learning so much along the way. I'll share neat knot data and info I've learned in future articles. Spoiler alert.... I tie different knots now than I used to!

Knot testing results as of April '24. Testing has been done with Rio Powerflex tippet, 5X which is rated at 5 lbs. Each knot is tested 10 times, tied carefully, and lubricated before cinching tight. The summary in the chart here shows the knot tested, and its average breaking strength. Go to Jon's Blog for more detailed info about testing, recommended knots, and tying instructions... Siouxriverrambler.com

Knot name	Average breaking strength
Clinch Knot	4.08 lbs
Improved Clinch Knot	4.10 lbs
Davey Knot	3.4 lbs
Improved Davey Knot	4.48 lbs
Palomar Knot	4.73 lbs
Double Surgeons Knot	2.89 lbs
Triple Surgeons Knot	3.35 lbs
Blood Knot	3.29 lbs
Orvis Tippet Knot	4.35 lbs
Non-slip loop (clockwise)	3.72 lbs
Non-slip loop (counter clockwise)	4.69 lbs

WRTU Chapter Trout Stream Data by County

As of January 23, 2024 (data supplied by the WI DNR)

WRTU Chapter are the stewards for 2,126 miles of Wisconsin trout streams.

Ashland	CLASS I	44.52 miles (12%)
Ashland	CLASS II	195.05 miles (52%)
Ashland	CLASS III	134.62 miles (36%)

Ashland County has 80 trout streams, totaling 374 miles of trout streams.

Bayfield	CLASS I	307.22 miles (53%)
Bayfield	CLASS II	175.41 miles (31%)
Bayfield	CLASS III	88.70 miles (16%)

Bayfield County has 138 trout streams, totaling 571 miles of trout streams.

Burnett	CLASS I	63.83 miles (55%)
Burnett	CLASS II	33.82 miles (29%)
Burnett	CLASS III	18.63 miles (16%)

Burnett County has 38 trout streams, totaling 116 miles of trout streams.

Douglas	CLASS I	141.97 miles (41%)
Douglas	CLASS II	103.04 miles (30%)
Douglas	CLASS III	102.50 miles (29%)

Douglas County has 68 trout streams, totaling 347 miles of trout streams.

Iron	CLASS I	56.62 miles (17%)
Iron	CLASS II	178.68 miles (52%)
Iron	CLASS III	106.08 miles (31%)

Iron County has 77 trout streams, totaling 341 miles of trout streams.

Sawyer	CLASS I	158.70 miles (58%)
Sawyer	CLASS II	82.61 miles (30%)
Sawyer	CLASS III	30.65 miles (12%)

Sawyer County has 67 trout streams, totaling 272 miles of trout streams.

Washburn	CLASS I	44.58 miles (42%)
Washburn	CLASS II	48.16 miles (46%)
Washburn	CLASS III	12.79 miles (12%)

Washburn County has 33 trout streams, totaling 105 miles of trout streams.

Wild Rivers TU Chapter Goes Into the Schools

By Bob Traczyk

In March and April members of the Wild Rivers volunteered in Sandra Naas' biology class at Ashland High School. Dick Berge, Frank Pratt and Bob Traczyk rotated as instructors to about 25 students.

The instructors started with the basic principles of threading a hook shank, and showed the students the basic tools we use in fly tying. The kids learned how to work a vise, use a bobbin, load thread in a bobbin, and perform a half hitch to save the materials that had been attached to the hook shank.

The fly patterns ran the gamut starting with the woolly bugger and ending with a dry fly. Frank taught the lead-free turkey leech that would leave traditionalists with their jaws dropped. And the class is not over yet because we have fly casting in a week (April 17th) and then in May the flies will get tested on the trout at Les Voigt Hatchery.



Sparkle Dun

By John Simonson (WiFlyfisher.com)

Many of us dry fly fishermen look forward to the April showers which help encourage *Ephemerella subvaria*, the Hendrickson to emerge. After a long Winter there is nothing like seeing those gray winged mayflies sailing down our northern trout streams. We are so lucky that we have the early catch and release season. Otherwise, during warmer years we might not get to experience this wonderful hatch.

My favorite dry fly pattern for the Hendrickson hatch is the Comparadun or Sparkle Dun. This fly pattern has proven to be a deadly pattern for me when the trout are looking up. I tie it two ways, either with a zelon shuck at the tail (Sparkle Dun style) or with just stiff hackle fibers for the tail (Comparadun style). The key to tying it is using the right deer hair to make the upright wing silhouette and to help the fly float better. The best floatant I have found for the Comparadun fly pattern is Dry Magic, it really works well even after a fish have been chumping on it. Works even better than Frog's Fanny Floatant for this pattern.

For tying instructions for the Comparadun or Sparkle dun fly pattern do a search on YouTube. There are many great how to tie videos for the Comparadun fly pattern.



WRTU Chapter Expo 2024 Report

By John Simonson

Our WRTU Chapter Expo on April 6th at Flat Creek Lodge in Hayward Wisconsin turned out to be a wonderful event. We had what appeared to be a record attendance and generated over \$7,000 after expenses. Flat Creek Lodge provided us with a great convention facility for our 2024 Expo.

It is always a gamble when you make a change like we did this year; will people attend, will we generate the dollars we need for upcoming cold-water conservation projects, etc. Fortunately, the WRTU Chapter Expo turned out to be a great success thanks to everyone.

I want to thank all the wonderful conservation organizations that gave up their Saturday to exhibit at our Expo. We had 16 different exhibitors including: WI-DNR, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. FWS, Wild Rivers Conservancy, Rivers of Recovery, Brule River Sportsman Club, Landmark Conservancy, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Superior Rivers Watershed Association, Brule River Fish Hatchery, Sierra Club, Great Lakes Trout Unlimited, and the Chequamegon Chapter for the North Country Trail.

We had two wonderful presentations as well. One about the fish passage issues in our area by the WI DNR. The other by the National Park Service about the various mussel species in the St. Croix River and Namekagon River and how they contribute to the health of our rivers.

The success of this year's Expo was also made possible by the wonderful donations by the sales reps for the major fly-fishing brands – Fishpond, RIO, SIMMS, Redington, Scientific Angler, Umpqua, TFO, U.S. Army, Orvis, and Tenkara USA. Plus, the awesome flies from Dave Lucca, Dick Berge, Jim Emerson, and Craig Mathews; as well as fly tying materials and all the wonderful bass poppers and deer hair bass bugs that were donated. Also, the wonderful Thomas & Thomas 8wt, custom fly rod donated by Scott Allen, WI. TU Chair.

We had three extraordinary fly-fishing pro guide trips – Wendy Williamson, Jonathan Jacobs, and Craig Amacker. And a BIG Thank You to Duke Welter for being our auctioneer again this year for the live auction and for donating a day trip in the driftless with Duke.

I also want to thank the local fly shops for their support – Superior Fly Anglers in Superior, Anglers All in Ashland, Hayward Fly Fishing in Hayward, The Driftless Angler in Viroqua, Big Brook Baits in Seeley, and the Fly Angler in Blaine, Minn. Hopefully, I did not miss anyone who contributed to our successful 2024 Expo. If any member has ideas or wants to help us plan our WRTU Chapter Expo 2025, please feel free to contact me at john@wiflyfisher.com or (920) 212-0185. Thank you!

Please patronize our business supporters!

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