

Wild Rivers Tribune

WILD RIVERS CHAPTER



TROUT UNLIMITED



NOVEMBER 2025

Chapter Report

By John Simonson, Chapter President

Wild Rivers TU Chapter has been very busy this year, and we have accomplished many projects on many different cold water streams across northwest Wisconsin. Please see my article within this newsletter titled: **Wild Rivers TU Chapter 2025 projects in Review.**



In our October WRTU Chapter board meeting we decided for 2026 to have a **WRTU Chapter Banquet** instead of doing a WRTU Chapter Expo and Fundraising event. We are also in the process of updating our strategic plan and our mission statement. Like TU National we want to focus our efforts in 2026 on preserving and protecting our healthy cold water streams.

TU National recently changed their slogan to “*Every River needs a Champion.*” If you are on Facebook or Instagram, you may see TU National’s new sponsored ads with their new slogan. TU National also created a wonderful YouTube video, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF0b-r evt8> or use the QR Code at the right.



Instead of just thinking of our TU chapter as a bunch of avid trout fly fishermen, we want the public to see us as much more. We also want to find ways to get others within the communities involved with our cold water stream initiatives even if they don’t trout fish.

Healthy streams benefit all of us, and that is what our 2026 banquet will be about. So, stay tuned. If you want to jump in and help us, please feel free to email me at john@wiflyfisher.com, or call me at 920-212-0185.

The Importance of Healthy Trout Streams

By John Simonson

Anyone who is a member of Trout Unlimited probably recognizes the importance of our trout streams for our trout and our fishing. We know that trout often times feed on aquatic insects living on the bottom of our streams. So, we use various fly patterns to imitate the stream aquatic insects but rarely think about the insects living along the bottom of our trout streams.

How many fishermen know that brown trout are more tolerant to organic pollution than many of our mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies? I know of some Wisconsin trout streams where the mayflies are almost non-existent anymore, but brown trout are still doing okay. Many fly fishermen have read or witnessed firsthand, the decline of major mayfly hatches across the country, as well as in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, this means the health of many of our cold water ecosystems is declining, even though brown trout populations seem to be doing fine. Eventually there will be a ripple effect that will affect trout population as well.

If we forget about the earth warming issue for a moment, what else are the other possible issues causing the decline in aquatic macroinvertebrates in our cold water trout streams? How about...

1. Flood events causing major streambank erosion
2. Siltation caused by runoff into our streams
3. Neonicotinoids (Neonics) Pesticides used in agriculture that runoff into our streams
4. Pesticides used on residential properties that run off into our streams
5. Poor riparian zones, allowing soil runoff
6. Chemical contamination spills into our streams

We can help reduce the decline of our mayfly, caddisfly, and stonefly populations by focusing our efforts on correcting the above issues. Correcting these issues will help improve the overall ecosystems which in turn will improve the health of our cold water streams, which in turn will improve aquatic insect diversity and richness in our trout streams. These issues are correctable if we all put our minds and energy towards them.

Healthy streams produce healthy trout populations; it is that simple! Please join us in our fight to keep our northern cold water streams healthy.

Wild Rivers TU Chapter 2025 projects in Review

A lot of people don't realize what your dollar donations to Wild Rivers TU Chapter are used for. We are all volunteers, even the board members and all donations go directly to help protect and preserve our healthy cold water streams and rivers.

Adopted the White River State Fishery Area in Bayfield County for 3 years

- Donated \$3,600 to the DNR for the White River State Fishery Area
- Financed 2024 & 2025 DNR Angler Creel Survey
 - WRTU purchased the creel boxes and trail cameras
 - Placed throughout the White River in Bayfield County & area trout lakes
 - WRTU Chapter helped with tree planting along the South Fork of the White River
- WRTU Chapter helped with buckthorn removal.
- Helped DNR with removing three beaver dam on the South Fork of the White River
- WRTU Chapter purchased and supported the DNR tagging trout on the White River
- WRTU Chapter placed 5 Hobo data temperature loggers on the upper White River



Adopted the Clam River State Fishery Area for 3 years

- Donated \$4,000 to the DNR for the Clam River State Fishery Area
- WRTU Chapter helped with installing root wads on the North Fork of the Clam River
- WRTU Chapter worked on restoring lunger structures and fishermen aces trails

Donated \$1,500 to the Women's Veterans Rivers for Recovery for 2025

- Larry Man & Wendy Williamson assisted with the 4 women veterans' events

In addition, we've participated in the following activities throughout the past year:

- WRTU Chapter helped with adding logs at the bottom of the high bluffs along the Marengo River in the Lincoln County Forest from the devastating 2018 floods.
- WRTU Chapter helped the DNR and the Brule River Sportsmen Club doing alder removal along two sections of the Little Brule River.
- WRTU Chapter assisted the Burke Center and DNR with fish relocation before rerouting 500 feet along the North Fork of Fish Creek.
- WRTU Chapter purchased 18 Hobo data temperature loggers and installed them in various DNR suggested locations (\$1,500).
- A donation of \$2,500 was made to Great Lakes TU, accompanied by an additional Friends Grant of \$2,500.
- We are a Superior Rivers Watershed Association business partner – donated \$250.
- Started our Mosquito Brook climate resiliency project.
- Taught fly tying and fly casting over the past Winter at Ashland High School
- Helped sponsor and volunteer at the Kids Fishing Day at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
- Taught fly tying and fly casting and teaching about our stream insects during Brule Hatchery's Family Fun Day.

Storage Rental Space Needed

WRTU Chapter is looking for a small rental storage facility to store our various WRTU signage, trout tying equipment, fly casting equipment, etc. Right now a couple of our board members, Bob Traczyk and I have all the items. It would be better for our chapter to have all the items in one place.

If you have any suggestions, please call or email Bob Traczyk or John Simonson.

- **Bob Traczyk - email address: bbtraczyk@gmail.com**
- **John Simonson – email address: john@wiflyfisher.com**

Iris Caddis Fly Pattern

By John Simonson

Several years back I was tying flies with Craig Mathews at Campfire Lodge's Salmonfly Festival in West Yellowstone, MT. After I watched Craig tie his Iris Caddis fly pattern I told Craig I thought the pattern looked strange and he even agreed with me, but he also said it can be deadly during a caddis hatch. It is supposed to represent a caddis struggling to escape its pupal shuck while emerging on the surface.

Recently on the Namekagon River I was getting refusal on everything I tried on several large brown trout rising to caddis on the surface. I finally put my fly rod down and I got behind the trout to observe what they were eating. I saw these small, football shaped caddis on the surface trying to escape their trailing shucks.

The next day I returned in the afternoon with three Iris caddis I tied up the night before. I hooked trout after trout with the Iris Caddis. For two days I had a ball with the Iris Caddis fly pattern before the hatch dwindled out on the third day. I now carry several Iris Caddis flies in my vest.

It is really a simple pattern and does not take many materials. To learn to tie the fly see Craig Mathew's Iris Caddis YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIZDJTk1Pg>.

I will be happy to teach others how to tie the Iris Caddis at our 2026 Spring fly tying event which will be held in conjunction with Great Lakes Trout Unlimited. Stay tuned for the upcoming TU event announcement.



Underneath of Iris Caddis pattern



Top of Iris Caddis pattern



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