

TROUT UNLIMITED HEADWATERS CHAPTER 642

NEWSLETTER

Spring



Important Information for You

Thank you, because you are reading this means you're probably already a Headwaters chapter member that supports and believes in TU goals of conservation, (education), restoration and protection of our cold water fisheries. If you're a volunteer a huge Thank You. You are the reason for this chapter's success. You will see this volunteer recognition through out this newsletter.

As a mark of volunteer accomplishments our recent review of 25 years of chapter history shows an amazing number of over 12,000 participants. These numbers include number of participants in our Youth Fly Fishing program started in 2001, Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program started in 2007, all fly tying events, all short term and long term instructional events add up to over 12,000 participants. All of us volunteers can feel proud of sharing this great gift of our love, appreciation and respect for not just fly fishing but all the quality natural resources that make it possible.

There is important information for you inside from Kris Williams our board president and John Lueth a board member about Great Waters Expo and up coming events. Jim McCracken our TIC coordinator provides a first hand current summary of Trout in the Classroom. There are new opportunities here for volunteers to connect with kids in classrooms regarding watersheds, trout life cycles, aquatic insects, conservation/environmental education, natural resource education and just being a helping hand with related activities. If you have experience, related training or just interest in any of these areas and would like to volunteer in TIC, call Bob Wagner or Jim McCracken (numbers on back). It can be fun and rewarding.

Check out the article on increasing your success catching trout through the ice by Steve Young. If stream restoration or habitat work is of interest to you check out opportunity piece by John Sorensen.

If you want to help with Youth fly tying and casting program, it starts April 1, every Tuesday for 4 weeks, only 2 hr a week plus take a kid fishing on the Clearwater river, call Bob Wagner.

Last but maybe most important if you want to stay connected to upcoming events this spring, summer or fall we can only afford this hard copy flyer once a year, therefore all the other special notices are sent via email. Over half of our memberships do not come with an email address and some of you have said do not email that means you will not get news or information about your chapter. If you want to stay connected and in the loop. Please make sure we have your email and permission to email you.

Contact us by calling the president or going to a website fill out form and tell us we can email you.

We are all volunteers, we have a quality successful chapter because of YOU. Thank you

Your Editors

You are invited Tuesday, March 11
Mark your calendars!
Rutgers Birchmont Lodge on Lake Bemidji
Headwaters Chapter 642 Annual Meeting
Free....No cover charge

5:30 Social hour open cash bar
6:00 Dinner order off limited menu
6:45 Short business meeting
7:15 Programs

*Catching Trout in SE Minnesota: Tips, tactics, places and flies.

Presentors: Mark Studer and Steve Young

Two experienced fly guys who really enjoy the SE.

*Current data on two local trout stream; Straight River
and Kabekona. Presenter:

Park Rapids Cold Water Fisheries Specialist

Also Buy and Sell Table(dig out your unwanted stuff)

Door Prizes Great Raffle items

Don't miss this event and bring a friend or two!



**March
11**

**Rutgers
Lake
Bemidji**

**5:30
Social
Hour**

**It's Free
No
Cover**

**Door
Prizes**

**6:00
Dinner**

**7:15
Program**

Headwaters TU News

Welcome our newest chapter members to the south of us. This summer it became official and we now have members in the Alexandria, Little Falls and Brainerd areas. The map shows our chapter area is the largest but has relatively low membership.

We have 297 members spread out in the region, majority in the Bemidji area. This leaves those living more than an hour away being under served. While our chapter does events in areas like Grand Rapids, Brainerd and Alexandria, we are limited in what we can offer. To better communicate and serve outlying members we are trying to identify "A point of contact person" in these outer communities. This person would simply help with calls and or organization of TU events in your area. Dave Simon in the International Falls area and Doug Harthan in the Perham, Fergus Falls area are willing to be "A point of contact person". We have done outreach activities such as fly casting in Grand Rapids at the Forest History Center, Brainerd at the Youth Expo and Alexandria at the Youth Outdoor Activity Day. These activities would better serve your community with a "A point of contact person". Please call us if you are interested.



Up coming Events

Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo March 21,22,23: You have a tremendous opportunity to volunteer at the largest Fly Fishing Expo in the Midwest held at Hamline University. For a couple of hours volunteering on behalf of TU642 you can receive FREE admission for the entire day! You do not need to know how to tie a fly nor instruct others on tying a fly. Simply being on hand to lend a hand in our booth is one great way to volunteer. For seven years Headwaters chapter has had a booth at Great Waters where youth (of all ages) are invited to sit down and tie their first fly. Your presence on Saturday is particularly helpful because that is the busiest day of the Expo. Call John Lueth or Kris Williams with questions or details. See numbers on back page.

Fly Tying Nights at the Garden Pub and Grill: We have resumed our community fly tying nights. We have beginner and advanced nights. These have been running all winter and have a few sessions left.

Tying starts at 6:15-8:30 Many participants come early and eat before tying. Beginner March 6 and Advanced February 27 and March 13, 27. We also tied flies with the American Fisheries Society at BSU.

Youth Fly Fishing program April 1,8,15,22 2:50-5pm: This program teaches fourth graders about fly fishing. We have fly tying, ethics, knots and casting included in our program. We do take them out to the river in May to fish. Volunteers are needed and if you like helping kids please give Bob Wagner a call, numbers are on the back page.

Trout in the Classroom: See Jim McCracken's article on our program. But did you know Trout in the Classroom (TIC) is a national program with over 60 schools participating in Minnesota sponsored by Minnesota Trout Unlimited. Trout tanks are located in Minnesota from Rochester to Iron Junction up by the Canadian border, and from Detroit Lakes to the west and the Iron Range and Duluth to the east. In some of these locations, Minnesota TU members are helping out with delivering eggs to classrooms, helping students trap micro invertebrates in trout waters. Unfortunately, not all TIC schools have the gift of TU members to help with these activities. TIC is a great way for TU members to rally with other TU members to volunteer for a worthy cause. It's a simple but profound way for TU members in our chapter to share their passion for trout and a clean environment with elementary students in their own backyard. So if you're interested we can see if there is a tank in your area for you to help with. Give a call. Headwaters does a tank sponsorship and we would like to thank our Tank sponsors this year. A big **Thank You** to Bemidji Woolen Mills, the Grimes Family, North Country Dental, Sandford Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Peter and Durayne Mitby, Beltrami Electric, Bemidji Brewing and Rachel Gray.

Volunteers

Volunteers are not only the lifeblood of our local organization, they bring new ideas, creativity, expertise, and great strength which permit Headwaters TU 642 achievements! Recognized around Minnesota as one great TU chapter, it's you, me and our friends and neighbors who bring to reality our programs. Thanks to those of you who helped deliver trout eggs, assisted in community fly tying nights, helped teach BSU students to tie flies, helped with youth fly fishing, lent a hand with stream restoration, helped with community events....just to name a few. All great opportunities for members, where one or two hours makes a big difference! and is fun to do! The students (young and old) the fish, our rivers, lakes and all their connected natural resources need you the Volunteer. Please join us, you will be glad you did.

Thank you Kris Williams, President 642. John Leuth Boardmember and Jim McCracken T.I.C Coordinator.

Fly Shop Changes

Bob Mitchell Fly Shop in the Twin Cities has closed and been acquired by Thorne Brothers (the Fly Angler) in Blaine. Thorne Brothers will keep the name and fold it into their existing business. BMFS had been around for almost fifty years, but like many brick and mortar shops found it hard to compete with internet shopping. And, closer to home, Front 20 Outfitters has closed their location in Perham. Doug and Roxanne are still operating out of a nicely remodeled space on their home place between Perham and Menahga, and are open most Saturdays or by appointment. They are continuing to give tying and fly fishing classes, as well as guided trips. And, of course, have lots of great fly fishing conversation at the shop. Support your local fly shops!

Trout on the Ice

The winter trout season on lakes is open in our part of Minnesota until March 31. Although there are several varieties of trout in our lakes – brook, brown, splake, lakies, rainbows – it's rainbows that we are most likely to catch and what I will focus on here. So here are some ideas to get you started if you aren't already into ice fishing for trout. Winter is a great time to catch larger rainbows, and a meal of fresh trout in the winter is always a treat.



GEAR: It doesn't have to be complicated. If you fish crappies or bluegills through the ice, you've already got it all. A limber ice fishing rod lined with 4 or 6-pound test line is sufficient. A depth finder will improve your efficiency but is not essential. The new in-line reels are nice, because they limit the twirling that your jig might do after you've dropped it to the depths. But again, not essential. As the weather warms later in March you may not even need an auger; just pop open somebody else's hole with a chisel. Portable houses are nice if it's cold or if you want to look down the hole, but you can catch trout without them.

SETUP: At times I'll set up in ten to fifteen feet so I can see bottom and be near very shallow water where they might feed. Other times I'll fish the deepest part of a lake. Drill two or three holes close together and then chisel out the ice in between them to make one larger hole, so you can easily watch the trout swimming around (which is very cool!). Darken your portable by banking snow against it to improve visibility. It's helpful to be able to watch them bite, because the take can be very subtle at times (if you see the jig disappear, set the hook, even if you don't see your rod tip move). However, if it's nice out just drill one hole, sit in a lawn chair, watch your rod tip carefully, and forget the house and the big hole. If you don't get much action in the first hour or two, move to another part of the lake, especially to an area of significantly different depth.

PRESENTATION: Rainbows are often feeding just under the ice, where insects collect. This is particularly true of backswimmers, which need to breathe air, and are a favorite winter rainbow food in our lakes. So, I'll usually fish only five to ten feet below the ice, regardless of how deep the water might be. With a depth finder you can see them come through at deeper depths, so you can quickly drop down to them, but more often than not the hungry trout will be just below the ice. My go-to presentation is a small (1/16 oz) white hair jig tipped with a waxworm, although you can catch them with small flies, tiny jiggling raps, and other things. For instance, I've tried crickets (lousy) and nightcrawlers (good if you can find them), and a friend has used beetle larva found while splitting wood (good). But remember, no live minnows are allowed in designated trout lakes. I like a subtle presentation, so a real slow lift and drop works best for me. When a rainbow comes in to check my jig out I'll usually stop movement or slowly lift the jig. But sometimes they hit jiggling raps, so you never know

RAINBOW BEHAVIOR: You will get lots of refusals, but that's part of the fun – the excitement that comes with seeing a nice trout circling your jig, whether it bites or not. They do tend to school a bit, so it's not uncommon to see or catch a couple in quick succession. Rarely do I see minnows in their gut when I clean one; it's usually backswimmers, midge larva, or just black insect mush. However, I have occasionally found giant water beetles, and once a friend cleaned a larger winter rainbow that had four frogs in its stomach!

As you would expect from a rainbow, they fight really well and taste great, particularly the smaller ones. The limit is five, with no more than three over 16 inches. Some trout lakes are closed in the winter (like Bad Medicine), so be sure to check the regulations before heading out. Have a trout stamp (if you are 18 or older), and remember you need a new license starting March 1st. Good luck and have fun.

Steve Young 642

Restoration Habitat Projects

In our Headwaters chapter there are dozens and dozens of lakes and streams currently managed for trout by the DNR Fisheries or Federal Fisheries programs. These lakes and streams provide both winter and summer trout fishing opportunities. One of Trout Unlimited's mission goals is to provide restoration and habitat work to these lakes and streams. Our chapter has always been involved in various restoration projects including; several helicopter (yes helicopter) tree drops on the Straight River, a blue ribbon naturalized brown trout stream, in the Park Rapids area, alder removal, improved cattle crossings plus habitat shelter work on the Kabekona and Necktie Rivers just to name a few. These projects need you a TU volunteer to help do the work and it's a lot of fun. Call John Sorensen 218-766-4341 and ask to be put on his restoration list so when projects come up he can call you.



Trout Unlimited Minutes for Spring 25 Newsletter

Board Meeting – September 24, 2024

Location: Garden Grill, Bemidji MN

Called to order at 19:08

Board members present: Pres. K. Williams; J. McCracken; V. Wagner; B. Wagner; J. Sorensen; M. Bjornrud; C. Parsons; J. Leuth; R. Brown

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from meeting on 4.1.24 Meeting

Rose moves to approve, Val second. Passes unanimously

Treasurer's report: Checking account balance as of 9/24/2024 is \$7292.10

Have encountered a hangup with the Spring Fly Fishing Program invoice from ISD 31 and may not get paid. Continuing conversation. Invoice came late summer and ESSER money was already allocated.

Charlie moves to accept treasurer's report, Bob second. Passes unanimously.

Business:

- Review and approve past minutes
- Treasurer's report
- State TU updates
- Committee reports
 - TIC Jim
 - TIC Committee
 - Restoration - John S.
 - Outreach / Education
 - Community Fly Tying
 - Great waters
 - Youth Fly Fishing Program
 - Fly Casting Experience

● New Items

- Anthony Hillukka - Heartland Christian School looking to do fly tying in the classroom. 30 students grade 3-12
- Fall Meeting
- Pike Hunt
- Fly Tying
- Election (Board)

Meeting adjourned at 20:32

Board Meeting – February 17, 2025

Location: Kris Williams Home, Bemidji MN

Called to order at 17:00

Board members present: Pres. K. Williams; J. Sorensen; B. Kaney; J. McCracken; V. Wagner; B. Wagner; M. Bjornrud.

Treasurer's report: Checking account balance as of 2/17/2025 is \$9,750.00

Recently deposited \$1100 of TIC sponsorship donations

Spring 2024 invoice for fly tying club at ISD 31 was paid shortly after the September meeting.

Will be sending out \$2500 to MNTU for Education Sustaining Fund as has been committed.

Business:

- March 11, 2025 Member Meeting Planning
 - Location - Ruttger's Lodge
 - Speakers
 - Raffle/Door Prizes

Meeting adjourned at 18:45



Trout in the Classroom

Jim McCracken

Chapter 642 is supporting 8 Trout in the Classroom(TIC) tanks in the immediate Bemidji area this school year including 1 each at Cass Lake Middle School, Kelliher Public School, Schoolcraft Learning Community and Headwaters Science Center. Four tanks are at Gene Dillon Elementary.

There are 8 additional tanks within the geographic bounds of our Chapter, but currently do not have any direct volunteer support from 642 members. Those school tanks include Bertha-Hewitt, Crosslake Community School, Detroit Lakes Middle School, Discovery Middle School, Northern Lights Community School Warba, Miltona Science School Magnet, Parkers Prairie High School, and Sauk Center High School. If you live in one of these communities, this would be a great opportunity to volunteer at one of these schools and support TIC. Your support could include helping to deliver trout eggs and fish food, visit classrooms and assist students when they release their trout in the Spring. If that sounds like fun (and it is!) please contact me at 218-209-0897 or mccrackenbjj@gmail.com.

We had a bit of a scare with egg delivery in December due to the shipment of eggs to the schools getting lost by FedEx. None the worse for wear, all the eggs survived the delay and were delivered just one day late. Special thanks to our team of delivery volunteers for their extra effort and patience to make it all happen. Those volunteers included Rose Brown, Steve Young, Jeff Marden, and Jon Blessing. For the first time, our Chapter was also a part of a complex relay team of volunteers delivering eggs as far east as Babbitt and Detroit lakes to the south.

So far, all of the tanks are doing well with one exception. Unfortunately, the tank at Kelliher had a complete die-off.

We did attempt a test transfer of fish from Dillon Elementary, but that too failed. A big thank you to Dillon students and teachers for sharing some of their fish in that effort! Given the complexity of variables with running a tank, at this time it is difficult to identify a specific cause of the die-off. However unfortunate, the experience was still a valuable lesson for the students about water quality.

Two big activities are coming up later this Spring. First, some students will be touring the Spire Valley Fish Hatchery in April. Second, mark your calendars for May 15th and 16th Release Days (May 22-23 back-up dates). This is the biggest event of the year for TIC with all 4 Bemidji area schools and over 200 students participating on the Clearwater River northwest of Bemidji. In addition to releasing their trout, students will also be experiencing some hands-on, heads-on stream side field experiences. This is also the biggest day for volunteers who will be helping out with releasing trout, chaperoning students and leading activity stations. You can volunteer for a half day or whole day on the 15th or a half day on the 16th or both days! Again, contact me at 218-209-0897 or mccrackenbjj@gmail.com.

As you can see, the TIC Program is active in the Bemidji area and has grown significantly over the years. This growth has meant that instead of just one person coordinating the program the Chapter now has an Education Committee of dedicated volunteers to support TIC locally. Those volunteers include Rose Brown, John Lueth, Charlie Parson, and Val and Bob Wagner. They have been helping out with arranging tours, classroom speakers, tank sponsorships and more. Please thank these folks when you see them, and consider volunteering yourself for a highly rewarding activity!



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North Shore Steelhead It gets going in April!

