



Slacklines

A quarterly publication of the Kalamazoo Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

DECEMBER
2023

CHEERS TO YOU

As we approach year's end, take a minute to reflect on what a difference our chapter—your chapter—is making. And pat yourself on the back for the role you have played.

Maybe you've been an advocate and voice to our lawmakers, to ensure protection of our great waterways. Maybe you've helped out with our education efforts, whether camps or classes or fishing fairs. Maybe you've jumped in the water to clear obstructions, remove dams, monitor stream flow or temperatures, or count macroinvertebrates. Or put your muscles to work out of the water, planting trees, clearing pathways, cleaning up highways.

Maybe you've helped with our diversity outreach to bring more women, youth, and unengaged communities into our fold. Maybe you've helped financially, with fundraising, grant writing, donations, or generosity at our annual banquet. Maybe you help out with administrative details like finances, reporting, meeting arrangements, planning. Maybe you tie flies for our many classes or Tie-A-Thon.

Maybe you attend our events, adding to the camaraderie, fun, and fellowship. Maybe you invited a new member to a chapter meeting. Maybe you showed a kid, or a new member, or a veteran, the joys of fishing, or fly tying, or of just being outdoors. And the importance of being a steward of our natural resources.

Maybe you simply cast a line solo while treasuring the environment you found yourself in.

Maybe you simply pay your dues, read this newsletter, and cheer on from the sidelines. It's all good.

It's exciting to see so many young, diverse, and energetic people getting involved with our chapter and its causes. At the same time, we honor the chapter founders and "old guard" who made such a strong foundation to usher in the new generation.

We are one of the most active chapters in the country, thanks to all of you.

Whatever your involvement, be proud and pat yourself on the back. And have a wonderful holiday season!

Connie Morse, *Slacklines* Editor



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

[In Case You Missed It](#)

[Welcome New Members!](#)

[The One That Got Away](#)

[Double Your Gift's Value](#)

[Fly Fishing With a Friend](#)

[Think Spring!](#)

[KVCTU Banquets: A History](#)

[Stream Projects](#)

[Camp News](#)

[Fly Patterns](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

MEET JORDYN

Dr. Jordyn Stoll is our new Michigan Trout Unlimited Aquatic Ecologist.

Jordyn's formal interest in Aquatic Ecology began during her undergraduate work at Cleveland State University, where she conducted paleolimnology research using diatoms to understand changes in lake conditions over time.

From there, she pursued a PhD at Kent State University, where she studied the effects of nutrients on algae in the Great Lakes, Lake Victoria, and the Cuyahoga River.

Now as an Aquatic Ecologist with Michigan TU, she hopes to engage Michiganders in better understanding and preventing the spread of Didymo, while also working to improve coldwater habitat through restoration efforts.



Jordyn Stoll at work.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

OCTOBER CHAPTER MEETING

Didy What? *by Pete Mathews*

Our opening meeting for the 2023-24 season featured guest speaker Dr. Jordyn Stoll.

After earning her PhD in aquatic ecology, Jordyn joined Michigan Trout Unlimited full time as Aquatic Biologist. Her presentation at the October meeting was on *Didymosphenia Gemmata*, aka didymo, aka “rock snot.”

Most of us have heard of this nuisance form of algae (diatom) recently discovered in three Michigan trout streams: Manistee, Boardman, and Saint Mary's Rivers.

It was interesting to note Jordyn refers to this algae as a nuisance species, not an invasive. It may be that it's been here, dormant, for years until recently blossoming. Didymo grows through photosynthesis, prefers colder water (<60 degrees), and is sensitive to phosphorus levels in the water. It prefers clear moving water to still warm water. When “blossoming” it can create dense mats that cover the bottoms of streams and rivers. Part of Jordyn's job here in Michigan will be to learn more about this pest.

Like other invasives, didymo can be transported on fishing paraphernalia including boats, anchor lines and, of course, waders and boots. It can live out of the water for up to forty days. So if you've been fishing waters known to have this algae, cleaning your gear is extremely important. Freezing works, but so does the household cleaner Formula 409. This comes in a spray bottle I keep with my waders at all times.

Watch for the spring issue of *Slacklines* (just before the season opens), where Jordyn will tell us how we can help further her research and slow the spread of invasives like didymo.



Jordyn Stoll explains the causes and effects of didymo.



Didymo attaches to rocks and substrates in rivers and streams. It forms dense, fibrous mats that are difficult to pull apart and remove.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

NOVEMBER CHAPTER MEETING

Learn to Tie Night *by James Young*



Jim Bour demonstrates how to tie the McClain's Drake fly.

November's chapter meeting was Learn to Tie Night at The Fountains in Parchment.

Jim Bour demonstrated the McClain Drake, and Paul Tulgetske showed how he ties the Blue Winged Olive Paraloop (see [page 10](#) for the patterns).

Attendees enjoyed the delicious Fountain's meal, enjoyed the tying, and as always, enjoyed socializing with one another.



Claire Strombeck, Madeline Young, and Olivia Strombeck tying flies.



Jerry Reed spoke to the crowd about the Weber and Disborough Fund .opportunities at the November chapter meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

by Paul Hammond

Be sure to extend a warm KVCTU welcome to the following folks who joined our club since the last issue of Slacklines. Invite them to a meeting. Or to go fishing!

Frank Arcangeli

Kelly Barry

Jesse Beaver

Karen Collins

Kenneth Foyder

David Kelley

Gerald Kurth

Tom Maatman

Chad Mabry

Abner Miller

Hafiz Mujahid

Philip Nicodemus

Ike Shetler

Jack Siemans

Anthony Teffner

Cade Tweedy

Cody White

Madeline Young

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Why is it??

We remember the fish that we failed to land more than the thrilling ones that we did catch??

Hatch Magazine recently published an article [Still crazy after all these years](#) that most fly anglers can relate to. It's a good read—check it out.

It's guaranteed to make you relive those moments you're still mourning over.

If you can bear to tell the tale, we'd love to share it in a future *Slacklines*. Send your story (try to keep it 250 words or less) to morsebums@gmail.com.

Maybe ... just maybe ... sharing it will help you recover.

Thanks to John Keagle for this tip!



KVCTU WILL MATCH YOUR DONATION!

by Jerry Reed

We're excited to announce that from now until the end of the year, the Chapter will match your donation to either the Stanley Weber Project fund or the George L. Disborough Trout Unlimited Research Grant Fund!

As the end of the year approaches, many of our members are reviewing their favorite charities for a year-end gift. You might be considering a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) or transferring funds from a tax-deferred retirement account to a charity in order to meet required minimum distributions (RMD) for the year and reduce your tax burden.

As you make your decision, please consider a donation to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for either of our Trout Unlimited funds: Disborough or Weber.

Thanks to a recent Board decision to match contributions (not to exceed \$6,000), this means your contribution will be doubled—and will have an even greater impact on the precious resources you care about.

The [George L. Disborough](#) Fund was established in 1990 to support masters or doctoral level research studies of trout habitat consistent with our TU mission to preserve, protect, and enhance coldwater resources. The [Stanley Weber Fund](#), established in 1999, has been providing grants to groups and projects that benefit coldwater fisheries and their habitats through conservation, preservation, restoration, and education.

The Foundation makes it very easy to [donate online](#).

You can also contact Beth Gregory-Wallis at the Foundation (bgregory-wallis@kalfound.org) should you need any assistance or information before making your gift.

Thank you for your support of these very worthy causes.



FLY FISHING WITH A FRIEND



On an absolutely perfectly beautiful September day, about 30 women gathered on the Au Sable to fish with a friend.

The event, coordinated by Laurie Seibert of Mershon-Neumann Heritage chapter, with help from Connie Morse of KVCTU and Paige Werner of Schrems West Michigan chapter, was to give women who need on-the-water experience a chance to fish with a mentor.

The three chapters have held several women's fly fishing classes. Between them, over the past 5-6 years, a least a few hundred women have learned fly fishing fundamentals. But opportunities to put their lessons to use have been limited. Thus the "Fly Fishing with a Friend" offering.

The day started with a delicious lunch at Gates Au Sable Lodge, followed by Mark Hendricks presenting a practical lesson in casting and mending. Then nine mentors, including KVCTU's Casey Timmons and Judy Chizmadia, took the women out into the river to practice and gain confidence in safe wading, casting, reading the water, knots, and etiquette. And one angler actually learned how to safely release a fish. (Though the fishing was fabulous, the trout were few ...)

The day ended at Gray Rock Pub & Grub in Grayling, with fish stories, fellowship, and lots of fun--along with eager plans for the next event.



THINK SPRING!

by Jim Bour

It may seem like it's a bit early to think of March when the brook trout and brown trout are spawning and deer hunting is happening. However, it's NEVER too early to plan for this year's KVCTU Conservation Banquet!

This year's fundraiser is going to be on **Thursday, March 14, 2024**. The Fountains Event Center will again be the locale.

Everyone who attended last year's event had a great time! The food and drink was outstanding. The fellowship was even better! At the end of the evening the tally revealed that 1,723 tall fish tales had been told, some repeatedly (insert winking smiley face emoji here).

“Everyone who attended last year's event had a great time! The food and drink was outstanding. The fellowship was even better!”

Again this year we'll have live auction, silent auction, and bucket raffles, along with winner-take-all tables. There will even be fun items and prizes for people who don't fish.

The proceeds from the banquet go toward supporting our many chapter activities. We perform stream improvement and research on local trout streams, such as Rice Creek. We hold educational sessions, both on-stream and off, for beginners and other anglers interested in increasing their knowledge. Some of the classes are dedicated to women only. Much of the banquet proceeds go toward supporting the Michigan Youth Conservation & Trout Camp. Our camp program has become the model that other chapters around the country use to start their own camps.

Please make a note of the date and plan on attending this year's banquet! We expect it to be bigger and better, and more fun, this year! We look forward to seeing you there.



Glen Blackwood, our Auctioneer Extraordinaire.

Thursday, March 14
Our 37th Fundraising Banquet
Don't Miss It!!

KVCTU CONSERVATION BANQUETS: A BRIEF HISTORY

by Dennis Martin

KVCTU has been a Trout Unlimited chapter since 1965. We have held local fundraiser banquets in the past. In 1985 Chapter President Mick Kolassa, who also served as State Council Vice Chair and National Membership Chair, learned about the TU National Conservation Banquet concept from TU National as a way to raise funds. TU National had an outline on how to do the event and provided a way for us to buy selected prizes through partner vendors, at a significant discount. In exchange for the partnership, the chapter would send a portion of the profits to TU National. It was a great fundraising idea for us and we helped TU National as well.

Our first National banquet was in March 1986 at the Kalamazoo Country Club. It took a lot of work and was very successful. We held the event there for several more years. Then we moved it to the Gull Lake Country Club and more recently we've held the event at the Fountains in Parchment.

Early on Mick would handle the auctioneer chores. Then we learned that Glen Blackwood, owner of Great Lakes Flyfishing, was a talented professional auctioneer and would donate his services for our banquets. He has been helping us for several decades. Glen has an encyclopedic knowledge of fly fishing gear, wildlife art, and fishing and hunting literature. In addition he has a great wit and the gift of gab. You can thank him for his support by visiting his shop in Rockford on the way north for your next fishing trip. Glen and his staff offer a full complement of flies, fishing gear, clothing and collectable outdoor books. And they can share the latest river conditions and hatches. Thank you Glen, for your support. Jack Spenner and I have had the pleasure of working as emcees at many of the banquets.

Through the years our chapter has received banquet donations from area businesses and talented members. Long time member Jim Wellever, a skilled woodworking craftsman, has donated beautiful tables, cabinets, benches and other unique creations that help us raise funds for the chapter. Over the years many other individuals have donated paintings, jewelry, pottery, flies, fly rods and other creations that have been in our silent and live auctions. We appreciate their generosity.

The chapter vice president coordinates each year's event. This year, as in the past few years, VP Jim Bour and the banquet committee volunteers put the event together. Planning the dinner, invitations, reservations, prizes and setup ... it takes a bit of work, and the event raises funds for chapter projects.

If you've never attended our banquet make plans to join us March 14 at the Fountains Banquet Center in Parchment. It's a lot of fun and it's open to the public, so invite your friends! You could win some cool prizes from the bucket raffle or bid on some quality gear, guided trips or other cool items in the silent or live auction. And you're sure to have a fun time.



Dennis Martin & Lou Kollar



Bob Woods & Fred Peabody



Chuck & Ellen Beyerlein



Mark Freeman, Chuck Beyerlein & Dan Crockett

STREAM PROJECTS

by Pete Huver

AUGUSTA CREEK

On Saturday, November 25, a group consisting of John Keagle, Greg Potter, John Weimeister, Jim Clark, Paul Tulgetske, Jim Dexter, myself, and two local volunteers Nick and Easton, met at Augusta Creek.

The cold 30-degree morning didn't deter this determined hard-working group from removing a beaver dam that was

creating flooding on private property. The work was done in with cooperation the DNR Wildlife Division, thanks to John Keagle who obtained a Nuisance Control Permit. Great work John!

After the beaver dam was removed we went downstream a bit and removed/relocated debris that was restricting water flows and in doing so we enhanced some of the invertebrate and fish habitat.

Thanks to all the fantastic help we completed the projects in under two hours!!! And a big shout out to John Weimeister, our chainsaw MAN!!!

We're looking forward to many stream projects in 2024, so stay tuned for announcements.



STREAM PROJECTS *continued*



Augusta Creek before the dam removal.



Augusta Creek after the dam removal.

RICE CREEK

In early October, Pete Huver, Tom and Connie Morse, Greg Potter, James Young, and Mark Karaba met on Rice Creek to make plans for using our leftover FishAmerica grant.

Initially, we had planned to use the \$15K grant for bank improvement at Ketchum Park, but after a work group cleared the obstructions at the Marshall Avenue bridge in the spring, we found the river level had dropped and was flowing just fine.



FishAmerica agreed to give us an extension, so we explored the upper reaches of Rice Creek to see what and where improvements are needed. A set of stairs needs rebuilding, and another set will be added along the creek path near the [Holt Property](#).

Pete Huver will be putting together plans for construction next spring. If you'd like to be a part of our "boots on the ground/waders in the water" crew, let Pete know at phuver@msn.com.



CAMP UPDATE

by Jon Chizmadia

The planning committee began working on next year's camp shortly after recovering from last June's camp. Watch for announcements, a new 2024 application, and camp website updates in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, be on the lookout for youth age 13-16 who would benefit from this life-changing, awesome camp, which will run from June 16th - June 20th.

The committee continues to find ways to keep camp affordable, while still outfitting the young anglers with a rod and loaded chest pack, via donations and fundraising.

You can be a sponsor by purchasing a pin (or two! or more!), designed by our very own KVCTU member and camp graduate Olivia Strombeck. Pins will be available at meetings and the March banquet for a minimum \$10 donation, or online for \$20.



Order your sponsor pin soon!

[Email Jon Chizmadia](#) if you'd like to be a sponsor, purchase a pin and be entered in a raffle, or know of a 13-16 year old—particularly from an underserved community—who would like to attend camp.

McCLAIN'S DRAKE (tied by Jim Bour at the November meeting)

Hook: Mustad #94831 3XL Size: 8-10

Thread: Black, 6/0

Tail: Pheasant Tail Fibers, small clump

Body: Wool from a WWII Army sweater, naturally bleached from sun light, tied with a loop, extended beyond the bend of the hook.

Post: Dry Fly Hackle Tips, 3-4, any color

Hackle: Brown & Grizzly, mixed, tied parachute.



Tying Tips: The recipe above is for the original. Today he used any dry fly hooks, 3X or 4X. The above fly uses olive hackle tips for the post and gray thread. The loop is not meant to be an egg sac, just a method used to extend the length of the body. Jerry also says that it can be tied in any size. Popular colors for the post are, green, orange and purple. Today, the fly body material is substituted with "Lion Brand," Wool-Ease Chunky Yarn, Walnut #127.

Fishing Tips: This fly was designed to be used any time there are dark insects on the water.

Historical Note: Jerry McClain was born in 1927 and lives in Grayling, Michigan. He was a river guide his entire life. He still does some occasional tying. He admitted to me that the original material was an accident. He left the WWII Army sweater on the clothesline and the sunlight bleached out the material. The original material was used up years ago. This fly was developed in the mid- to late-1940s. Jerry could not remember the exact date.

BLUE WINGED OLIVE PARALOOP (tied by Paul Tulgetske at the November meeting)

Tied on a 14 dry fly hook but you can match size to your hatch.

The tail is 5-6 fibers of Coq de Leon and the body is olive superfine dubbing.

Where the wing would go, make a loop with your thread to a gallows tool, tie in a dun hackle, wrap up the loop six times and back down six times, then tie the hackle off.

Finish the dubbed body, then cut the loop and tie off at the head of the fly and pull snug.

Whip finish the fly.



2024 Michigan Trout Unlimited Youth Conservation and Trout Camp



When: June 16th through June 20th

Where: Ralph A MacMullan Conference Center
104 Conservation Dr. Roscommon, MI 48653

Who: Open to everyone 13-16 years of age

For applications and info go to:
Michigantucamp.org

For questions contact:
admin@michigantucamp.org



(Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, all equipment will be provided)

Space is limited, Please apply by April 30th

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Teej Morse
Jim Shotwell

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

We've got some exciting speakers coming up, not to mention our annual banquet in March. You won't want to miss them, so be sure to ink the dates now.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| December 14 | Show & Tell Night |
| January 18 | Michigan Guide Jon Ray |
| February 15 | Jon Osborn and Allen Crater |
| March 9-10 | Midwest Fly Fishing Expo |
| March 14 | KVCTU Annual Banquet |
| April 18 | TBD |

The Fountains, Parchment
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Macomb Community College
The Fountains, Parchment
The Fountains, Parchment

KVCTU BOARD MEETINGS

KVCTU Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, September through April. An additional meeting is usually held midsummer.

All members are welcome to attend board meetings.

Because locations vary, if you would like to attend a board meeting please contact board president Emily Gundlach (gundlach.emily@gmail.com) for the time and place.

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Contributing to this issue of *Slacklines*: Jim Bour, Jon Chizmadia, Pete Huver, John Keagle, Dennis Martin, Pete Mathews, Connie Morse, Jerry Reed, Paul Tulgetske, James Young.

Please send your articles, feedback, and suggestions to Editor ConnieMorse@kvctu.org