

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

What a year we have had!! The amount of support and opportunities we have had are unmeasurable. Even though Nationals asks us to do an annual report haha.

The banquet was a wonderful event full of laughter and well deserved awards.

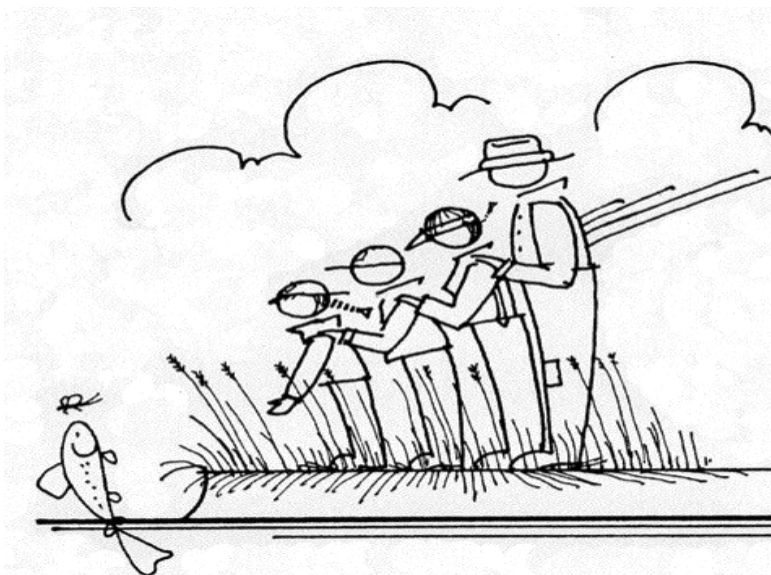
I am grateful to have an amazing board that keeps us all focused. This summer will be full of community events, Michigan Youth Conservation & Trout Camp, weekend outings and maybe even some fishing for me!

We are continuing to look for members of the board: Vice President, President, and a Webmaster. Also, I am open to suggestions for upcoming chapter meeting topics and speakers.

Keep an eye on your email and our [Facebook](#) and [website](#) for upcoming events. Our September meeting will be something to "look" forward to.

Thanks,

Emily (Tulgetske) Gundlach



*Celebrating the
Opener!!*

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ANNUAL BANQUET A HUGE SUCCESS! -- Jim Bour

This past March 16th we held our annual Conservation Banquet fundraiser at The Fountains Event Center, in Parchment.

After months of planning and preparing, the day of the banquet finally arrived. Volunteers spent the afternoon assembling tables, arranging buckets and placing items and gifts in their appointed locations. When the evening began a light rain was falling, however, our spirits were bright with anticipation for the awaited hour.



Mixing and mingling at the annual banquet.

The doors opened at 5:30pm and the crowd began to gather. People were quick to make their way to the bar area for beverages and then worked their way through the beautifully decorated event center. It was clear that people were anxious to see old friends and create new acquaintances in the process.



Lily with her treasure, after a winning bid.

“People were genuinely happy to be there, and the entire evening had a great vibe.”

Attendees spent much time putting tickets in desired buckets and examining live and silent auction items as well. Much to our delight many items to be auctioned or raffled were brought in the evening of the banquet. Volunteers Dennis Martin and Jack Spenner worked the crowd, encouraging participation in the raffles and auctions, as well as selling the playing card raffles.

Dinner was a hit with roast beef and pork tenderloin entrees along with delicious sides, and of course, dessert!



Jon Chizmadia receiving Member of the Year award.



Paul Tulgetske and Greg Potter earned Lifetime Achievement Awards.



Ken Kornheiser with a much-deserved Conservationist of the Year award.



Auctioneer Glen Blackwood.

Glen Blackwood again was the star of the evening with his wonderful auctioneering talent. Glen showcased his amazing ability to manage the sometimes-chaotic live auction by deftly guiding us through the twenty live auction items, the audience laughing the whole way. A few of the live auction items included artwork, fly rods and reels, guided fishing trips, Jim Wellever woodwork, and the amazing trip for two to the Nak Nek River Camp, in King Salmon, Alaska!

Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to two highly dedicated and very deserving members: **Paul Tulgetske** and **Greg Potter**. **Jon Chizmadia** was recognized as Member of the Year for his energetic and enthusiastic chapter work. **Ken Kornheiser** was honored as Conservationist of the Year. Additionally, Emerger of the Year awards were given to **Dani Cole** and **Caswell Evans**.

People were genuinely happy to be there, and the entire evening had a great vibe. Overall, the evening was a wonderful success, with over 100 people attending. Virtually everyone left with a smile and seemed eager to come back next year.



So many great items to bid on.



Here's a hopeful bucket bidder!

We were very successful in raising funds that help to support our commitment to the Michigan Youth Conservation and Trout Camp as well as our local educational activities and stream improvement work.

We hope to see everyone again next year for a bigger and better banquet!



THANK YOU!

Our Chapter Officers and Board Members thank the many people who made the banquet a success.

Certainly, a round of applause is well deserved for all the people who put their time and effort into the banquet as well as the many people who donated items to be raffled or auctioned. We are always amazed at how our members are so very talented and creative. Without them, the banquet would not occur.

A big thanks to Glen Blackwood, owner of Great Lakes Fly Fishing Co., for his expertise as well as our local corporate sponsorship from Aaron Ford, Kyle Emmerich, Paul Hammond (Evenboer Walton Realtors), Jim Wellever, and Mike Duckett (Freedom Maintenance).

Additional business sponsors include Jon Lee, Kevin Feenstra, D&R Sports, Keough Hackles/Hareline, Bell's Brewery, John Gouker, Derek DeYoung, Gates Lodge, North Branch Outing Club, and Gale's Hardware. A complete list of individuals and businesses is available in the banquet program.

STREAM PROJECTS -- Pete Huver

On Saturday April 15 we had a fantastic day of nearly 80 degrees!! So what do KVCTU people do? We do river cleanup!!! I'm super excited and thankful we had had around 20 volunteers that were more than ambitious, and we accomplished more than I had hoped for!!!

Part of the amazing experience was having new members who had just joined the club participate, as well as a Marshall resident who heard about the event through a friend of a friend—and brought his 5-year-old son!! It doesn't get much better than that!!

“So what do KVCTU people do? We do river cleanup!!!”

We cleaned up an area from the confluence of the Kalamazoo River to Monroe Street which involved some removal of woody debris and trash that blocked free flow and travel of the stream.



A pair of awesome river and trail stewards.

Additionally, we had a crew who CRUSHED it at the Marshall Street bridge, removing a large, very large, pile of logs and woody debris that blocked the north culvert. The stream dropped approximately 2 feet!!! An amazing accomplishment and rather dangerous! The really cool part is it will aid in the upcoming project we are planning for some bank improvement just above the bridge. We have the application with EGLE, hoping to get approval soon.

Yet another crew went to the Holt Property and cleared the trail from some downed timber and removed some trees impeding the stream!!!

This was in coordination with

Friends of Rice Creek. Great way to continue team efforts!!

I would like to again THANK all the fantastic help that day! We accomplished more than I anticipated in a very short time!!! You are all appreciated more than you know!!



Helping the stream flow.



Before and after at the bridge. Clearing out the blockage led to the water level dropping two feet. Well done, crews!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Jim Dexter always packs the house. Our final meeting of the season in April was no exception.

As it turns out, it was also Jim's final crowd-pleasing appearance as Michigan DNR Fisheries Chief, because he retired at the end of the month (just in time for the Trout Opener).

Congratulations to Jim on his many achievements throughout 35 years with DNR—especially during his last 12 years a fisheries chief.

We look forward to Jim's increased engagement with the chapter, and to seeing him with tight lines on the water.

Congratulations Jim. And thank you!

SPRING OUTING

We were delighted to resume our annual Spring Outing after a few years off.

A group of 12 met at [Batcke's Manistee River Lodge](#) (formerly Schmidt's Outfitters) in Wellston May 12-14. The accommodations were great, food was great, weather was great, camaraderie was great. And fish were caught!

Many thanks to Char and Paul Hammond for organizing the event and arranging/preparing food.



Tom Morse with a beauty of a brown trout at the Spring Outing.



Marlin Walter, Paul Karl, and Pete Huver prepare to conquer the Little Manistee.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

If you were traveling along M89 near Richland the morning of Saturday, April 22, you would have witnessed an energetic group of KVCTU members dressed in fluorescent colors, meticulously picking up litter for a mile along the highway.

We do this highway cleanup twice a year. Bob Vacarro is our organizer and safety monitor. He also makes sure we're hydrated and well fed.

Thanks Bob! (And thanks to all the volunteers!) (And thanks to those who brought more doughnuts and refreshments!)



Cleanup coordinator Bob Vacarro with Olivia and Claire Strombeck.



The cleanup crew celebrates a job well done.

TEACHING

FOR THE LOVE OF THE SPORT

KVCTU members have enjoyed teaching the pleasures of fly fishing and fly tying to eager learners of all ages these past few months. Here are some highlights.



Greg Potter, with help from Mike Smith and John Corcoran, taught a 3-night fly tying course at Heritage Commons Senior Enrichment Center in Marshall. The class loved making foam beetles, soft hackles, and (by popular demand) Dedeaux Poppers. Greg says a good time was had by all — no surprise there!



After completing a 4-night beginning fly fishing course at Kellogg Community College, taught by Connie Morse and Greg Potter, some class members met at Uncle Jake's Fly Shop where Paul Jakubiak taught them how to tie a wooly bugger.



Chris Henke's class at Mar Lee School was so popular, he put out a call for help from KVCTU members. Students learned tying, casting, bugs, knots, etiquette, and more. Then they capped off the class with some on-the-water successes!



UPCOMING TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES



Fly Fishing 101 Class - Fly Fishing 101 class will be held August 5 at the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery. It will be a one-day class this year and will cover fly tying, casting, theory and some practical application. Cost for the class will be \$50 and will include lunch and some snacks along with some gear. Loaner equipment will be available. If you're interested in participating or volunteering to help, please email kalamazoovalleychapter@tu.org. It's a fun day!



Scalin' Up For Summer - Volunteers are needed to help out with Scalin' Up for Summer, hosted by the City of Portage. The event is Saturday, June 10, from 10 am - 1 pm at Celery Flats, 7328 Garden Lane in Portage. We'll teach youngsters how to make spinners and assist with aquatic insect (bugs!) identification. No experience is necessary—just be ready to enjoy some eager kids! If you can help out, drop an email to kalamazoovalleychapter@tu.org.



Pheasants Forever Youth Day—The [Kalamazoo Rod and Gun Club](http://www.kalamazoovalleychapter@tu.org) is hosting a youth day for 8-12 year olds (with a mix of older kids from 14-16). KVCTU members are invited —bring your own kids, and/or demonstrate casting, bugs, knots, spinner making ... whatever. Kids love what we do. The date is June 17 and you can there anytime from 9-5. If you'd like the complimentary lunch, be there between 10-2. 7533 N Sprinkle Rd in Kalamazoo. If you can help out, drop an email to kalamazoovalleychapter@tu.org—or just show up!

FROM ROOSTER TAILS TO SOFT HACKLES

-- Dennis Martin

My first fishing experience was an eight-foot cane pole with a bobber, worm, and hook. I caught bluegills. Then I graduated to a basic Zebco rod and reel with which I caught my first northern pike.

When I got into junior high my interests turned to music and girls. Fishing took a back seat until I was about 22. My brother-in-law showed me how to spin fish for trout with an ultralight rod and spinning reel. The lure of choice was the Yakima Bait Rooster Tail spinner. We would wade wet in and around the Pere Marquette River and I became quite adept and confident with these spinners catching trout, pike, bass, bluegills and perch.



Fast forward to the early 1980s. I worked at WQLR Radio (Beautiful Music, 24 Hours a Day) and met TU member Tom Krol, who called on us for graphic printing projects for his company, Graphic Communications.

We started talking about fishing and he invited me to a chapter appearance at Crossroads Mall. There I watched Herb Spencer demonstrate knot tying. Several members were tying flies. I tried fly casting and succeeded in hooking the sprinkler system overhead.

“I’ve met many valued friends who are glad to share fly fishing techniques and fellowship.”

I learned about Trout Unlimited’s focus on coldwater conservation. All of this piqued my interest so I joined and started attending meetings.

At these meetings I heard great stories and hilarious jokes during the cocktail hour. I enjoyed dinner with my new friends and bought 50/50 raffle tickets. (I soon learned, any time 4 or more TU members gathered there would often be a raffle.) And I heard great speakers like Dave Johnson and Jim Dexter from the Michigan DNR, Joe Humphries, Earnest Schweibert, Tom Rosenbauer, Dave Whitlock and Sylvester Nemes.

Early on I was still a spin fisherman but Pat Connelly and others assured me that TU was not an exclusive fly fishing club and welcomed all anglers to help with the coldwater fisheries mission. But still, I wondered about these new terms I heard: spinner fall, tricos, tippet, streamer, parachute hackle and 5-weight.

Tom Krol invited me to fish with him on the Rogue River. (Where was that?) It turns out I had driven over that river and many others on my way to the Pere Marquette without knowing what opportunities awaited on those and other streams.

Tom let me use one of his fly rods rigged with a wet fly. He coached me to cast to about the 2 pm position and let the fly swing downstream until it straightened in front of me. I tried a few casts and got the hang of it.

On the third cast I felt a nice tug at the end of the line when it straightened. “Tom, I’m afraid I’m snagged,” I said. He replied, “You’ve got a trout and it’s a nice one. Raise your rod tip and bring your line in.” I gently released the nice brown trout and my fly fishing journey had begun.

As I got more involved in TU I took fly tying and fly rod building classes from Merrill (Doc) Katz, worked on stream projects, and went on several chapters outings to Wellston, McMasters Bridge and Wa Wa Sum where I discovered more interesting water, more humor and the John Voelker happy hour. I’ve met many valued friends who are glad to share fly fishing techniques and fellowship.

I am thrilled to meet new members and see so many young people attending our meetings. This is the future of coldwater conservation in our state which has 21 percent of the globe’s fresh water. There are always new challenges and opportunities.



This is me with my brother in law, Ron Hoth, who taught me the magic of the Rooster Tail. This is an Atlantic Salmon caught with a nymph on a fly rod.

I am proud to be a part of one of the most active Trout Unlimited chapters in the nation. Thanks to you all for what you give and share. Encourage your friends to get involved with this “action organization.”

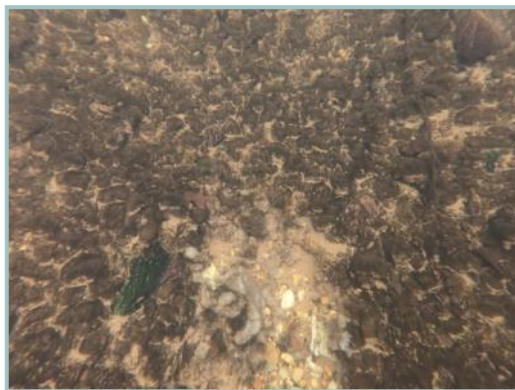
Today, my go-to fly is a soft hackle wet, yet there are times I’ll still use a Rooster Tail spinner. It’s all good.

THE SEASON IS HERE!

But don't forget invasive species prevention!

At long last, the April 29 trout opener arrived. Whether you were first in the river on opening day, or you're still planning your first foray, remember that the departments of Natural Resources and Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy are asking anglers to prepare for one more thing: decontamination.

Michigan's trout streams are under increasing threat from harmful species that affect habitat and food sources for trout and other fish. Both didymo (rock snot) and New Zealand mudsnail can be moved to new locations on waders, nets and gear.



Didymo growth on gravel in the Manistee River appears dark brown. Areas where thick growth sloughs off looks woolly and light tan, exposes clean substrate underneath. Photo courtesy of EGLE.

Didymo

[Didymo](#) is a microscopic diatom (single-celled alga) that thrives in cold, low-nutrient streams generally considered pristine. Under the right conditions, prolific growth, or blooms, result in thick mats that can cover river and stream bottoms, reducing habitat for macroinvertebrates including mayfly and caddisfly nymphs, which are important food for fish.

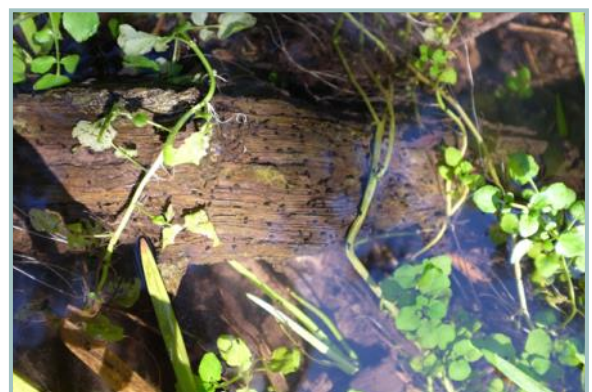
Didymo cells are believed to be native to at least parts of the Great Lakes basin; however, blooms are a recent phenomenon. Didymo blooms were first observed in Michigan waters in 2015 in the St. Marys River and then in the Manistee and Boardman rivers in 2021 and 2022,

respectively. Scientists are still researching the causes of blooms. Regardless of its native/non-native status, didymo has the potential to spread to new areas when cells attach to anglers' waders and gear.

New Zealand mudsnail

[New Zealand mudsnails](#) are only about 1/8 inch long and can be difficult to see. However, these snails can change the aquatic habitats they live in by reaching extremely high densities. When that happens, they can outcompete native macroinvertebrates, leaving fish food in short supply. The mudsnails have no nutritional value, which can negatively affect the overall condition of fish that feed on them.

New Zealand mudsnail populations are known to be present in the Au Sable, Boardman, Grass, Pere Marquette, Pine and Upper Manistee rivers in Michigan. Mudsnails can survive out of water for several days. Because of their small size, they are easily transported on boats, anchors and fishing gear such as waders and nets.



New Zealand mudsnails are visible on this woody debris near the mouth of Shanty Creek on the Grass River. Photo courtesy of Emily Burke, Grass River Natural Area, Inc.

Plan to decontaminate

To prevent these damaging species from hitchhiking on your waders and gear, make plans for decontamination before heading to the water.

Always **Clean, Drain and Dry** your waders, boots, boats and other gear between trips or before moving to a new body of water. Take extra precaution in areas with known or suspected didymo or New Zealand mudsnail infestations. In addition to removing debris and mud, the State of Michigan recommends using a chemical disinfectant to achieve maximum decontamination for didymo and New Zealand mudsnail. Possible disinfectants with documented effectiveness for these species include:

- Products such as Formula 409 Antibacterial All-Purpose Cleaner applied to waders and gear.
- Bleach: Apply a solution of one-half cup (4 fluid ounces) bleach to 5 gallons of water and let stand for 20 minutes.
- Virkon Aquatic: Apply a solution of 20 grams per liter of water and let stand for 20 minutes (see manufacturer's label for additional guidance).

Any chemical disinfectants should be applied to waders and gear on land, at a reasonable distance from the water, to avoid accidental discharge into surface waters.

Research into the effectiveness of products such as Formula 409 Antibacterial All-Purpose Cleaner as a decontaminant for other aquatic species and diseases is ongoing. The Michigan Invasive Species Program will update its recommendations, as needed, based on the best available information to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Report new detections

Public reporting plays an important role in early detection of invasive and nuisance species. Anyone encountering suspected didymo or New Zealand mudsnail in new locations is asked to photograph and report the find.

To report didymo, use the [Eyes in the Field online reporting system](#). Be sure to add up to three photos to aid in verification.

To report New Zealand mudsnail, make note of the location, date and time of the observation. This will aid in verification of your report. You may be asked to provide your name and contact information if follow-up is needed.



Check your gear carefully for these tiny hitchhikers.

Contact Lucas Nathan, DNR, at NathanL@Michigan.gov or 517-599-9323, or Bill Keiper, EGLE, at KeiperW@Michigan.gov.

Or use the [Midwest Invasive Species Information Network online reporting tool](#).

Or download the MISIN smartphone app at MISIN.MSU.edu/tools/apps/#home and report from your phone.

For more information on decontamination or aquatic invasive species, visit Michigan.gov/Invasives.



Fly One Kazoo 2023 is scheduled for July 15, 2023. We start around 9am, fish from 10-2pm, and then gather to brag and commiserate.

As most of you know, the event is held on the Kalamazoo River, in the Marshall Area. This is a beautiful stretch of river with solid bottoms of sand, gravel, and cobble. The water is clear and clean. However, not clean enough to drink. The fishery is primarily smallmouth bass, northern pike, sunfish, and a variety of bait fish. Last year, the most caught species was smallmouth bass. We don't count numbers, but inches of length. Last year the winning team logged in 160" of fish. That's a lot of fish at an average length of 8".

This is a fly fishing event with the restriction that anglers are allowed only one fly for the day. If the fly is lost, we do offer an opportunity to remain in the competition by buying a new fly of the exact same pattern with a \$10 donation to KVCTU.

This is a great time of year to wet wade. If the atmosphere is hot, the cool water will keep you comfortable. As a matter of safety and comfort, we only allow the event to take place if the water flow at Marshall is 350 cfs or lower. This is a comfortable level of water for most anglers.

After the catching, we meet at Dark Horse Brewery in Marshall for hydration, pizza, storytelling, and awards presentation. It is a great time to get to know your fellow chapter members and friends of the sport.

An email will or has already reached you with more about the event, an application, and links to the Rules and Liability Waiver and Photo Release. Because there are limited access points on the river, we are limited to eight teams (two per team, but if you include a youth you can have three on the team). For details, contact John Keagle at jkeag@tds.net.

So, call friends and make plans early. Come join us for a great day on the river!



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150 YEARS!

Michigan has a rich history of rearing fish since the state began operating hatcheries 150 years ago. [Read more about the history, locations, and successes of our state fish hatcheries.](#)

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.

Advertise in *Slacklines*!

1/6 page ad: \$30/issue

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Contact Emily at
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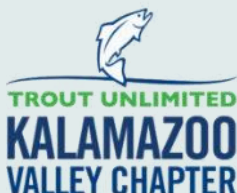
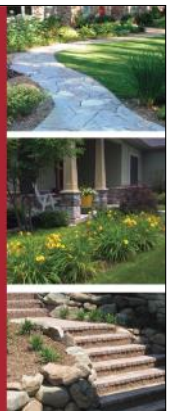


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Contributing to this issue of *Slacklines*: Jim Bour, Jon Chizmadia, Emily Gundlach, Pete Huver, John Keagle, Dennis Martin, Connie Morse, Greg Potter, Paul Tulgetske.

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