



The Evening

Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

September 2022

Summer & the Fishing Was Easy



MFFC members landed some dandies this summer like this 18-inch largemouth hooked from a float tube at sunset in northern Michigan. How sweet is that?

This summer was hardly normal – the pandemic is still with us; Yellowstone National Park was ravaged by floods that washed out roads, and rock snot has taken root in Michigan's trout streams. Still, it was summer, so MFFC members, as you would expect, were everywhere casting and catching.

This issue of the Evening Hatch is dedicated to our summer of fishing.

On **page 5**, MFFC member Neil Wallace has a feature on mousing for trout during an evening when he couldn't see those big browns but could hear them.

On **page 9**, Jim DuFresne writes about what many members have already experienced, introducing his granddaughter to fishing.

And on **page 8** is a photo essay on Tom Sewruck, who joined MFFC not long after the club was founded, and his grandson, Jordan Sewruck, who just joined the club this year.

Members also caught a few bass during the MFFC summer pot-luck, **page 3**, and learned a lot about fishing from Montana guide Alice Owsley at the banquet on **page 11**.

We also touch on the serious issue of the Camp Graying expansion on **page 12**. Please read that if nothing else.

Finally, on **page 2** is a story about Sybil Hunter winning the 2022 Howard Geller Award and a photo of her clutching her new four-weight Hardy rod. A plaque is nice, but who wouldn't want that rod!

Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Calendar

9/7/22 Speaker Meeting

9/14/22 Board Meeting, Virtual

9/21/22 Activity Meeting

10/5/22 Speaker Meeting

10/12/22 Board Meeting, Virtual

10/19/22 Activity Meeting

11/2/22 Speaker Meeting

11/9/22 Activity Meeting

11/6/22 Board Meeting, Virtual

12/7/22 Speaker Meeting

12/14/22 Board Meeting, Virtual

12/21/22 Activity Meeting–Garage Sale

1/11/23 Speaker Meeting

1/8/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

1/25/23 Activity Meeting

2/1/23 Speaker Meeting

2/8/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

2/15/23 Activity Meeting

3/1/23 Activity Meeting

3/8/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

3/18-19/23 - Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, Macomb Community College Expo Center

3/22/23 Speaker Meeting

4/5/23 Speaker Meeting

4/12/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

4/19/23 Activity Meeting

5/3/23 Activity Meeting

5/10/23 Board Meeting, Virtual

5/17/23 MFFC Banquet

Speaker and activity meetings are Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer St. through December, 2022.

An Award and a Hardy Rod for Sybil Hunter

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club's annual banquet returned in May after a two-year Covid-precipitated absence. So, too, did public recognition for the Club's Volunteer of the Year, the recipient of the 2022 Howard Geller Award.

The Club's most prestigious award was presented to new Club President Sybil Hunter. It was a first.

While a number of past presidents were given the award in the years following their terms, Sybil was the first incoming President to be honored.

In announcing the award, Geller Award Committee Chairman Mike Matuszewski said, "This year we are pleased to present the Volunteer of the Year Award to a long-time member who has served the Club in a wide variety of areas — as a Board member, an officer, editor of *The Evening Hatch*, revamping the Club's web sites and organizing the distribution network for the Club's 50th anniversary pins, among other contributions."

With Covid having disrupted the award presentation in 2020 and 2021, this year's Banquet also provided an opportunity for in-person recognition of Geller Award honorees for those years



Mike Matuszewski presents Sybil Hunter the Howard Gellar Volunteer of the Year award; including a Hardy 9-foot, 4-weight rod.

— Kathy Oehring and Dave Nowicki in 2020 and Kevin Lipp in 2021.

The 2022 Geller Committee was comprised of the surviving prior recipients: Matuszewski, Joe Sprys, A.L. Bulszewicz, Terry Herron, Todd Schotts, Bill Shannon, Peter Albertson, Oehring,

Nowicki and Lipp. Deceased award honorees are Howard Geller, who was the recipient of the first Volunteer of the Year Award and after whom the award was named; Mike Doyle, Jim Telinda and Joe Sattler

The President's Message.... *It's Good To Be Back*

Welcome back!

As fall slowly rolls in, it is time to gear up for terrestrial fishing, spey fishing, salmon fishing, and in the Hunter family – all things UofM Football. The team. The team. The team!

The same goes for the Michigan Fly Fishing Club. Board meetings start back up in September. Our monthly Club meetings double. Our raffle is ramping up to share larger offerings. We will be filling a vacant at-large position, seeing an old friend return to the Board, and welcoming an exciting number of new people to the Board as well.

Over the summer the MFFC was awarded a \$1,000 youth fly tying grant by Fly Fishers International, thanks to the ambition and hard work of Jim Aitken working with our FFI Representative Mike Matuszewski and FFI Great Lakes Council President Terry Greiner.

Also over the summer, we honored a handful of members that we lost. Patrick Dwyer, passed July 6; Joe Stefani, passed July 20. Dave Begley's Memorial Service was last month but he passed on March 26. John Pinto's Memori-



Sybil Hunter

al Service was last month. Former FFI Great Lakes Council President Jim Schramm, a friend of the club, passed on May 25, as did Terry Greiner. We will dearly miss them all.

New gatherings are in the works. September events start with a fishing trip, followed by Hunting & Fishing Night at the Tigers Ballpark the last Wednesday of September.

All these things bring us together as a group. I really look forward to seeing everybody in-person and continuing the great tradition of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

The hard work and perseverance that led you to this moment will take you far in life. You have so much to be proud of, and we wish you the very best in the years to come. Congratulations.

Sincerely,

Among those congratulating Sybil on becoming the first female president of MFFC was President Joe Biden.

MFFC 2022 Picnic; Eating, Fishing and Talking Trout



Picnic time for the MFFC! The annual club picnic was held July 17 at the Multi Lakes Conservation Association facility in Commerce Township (left) where members spend an afternoon socializing, fishing and eating a wonderful potluck spread thanks to Kathy and Don Oehring (below), food coordinator co-chairs. This year's event included included grilled hot dogs and burgers, pasta salads, taco salad, fruit, pickles, leafy salads.



Above left: Dave Nowicki in his aviators enjoying his picnic lunch. Above: John Eriksson, picnic chair, calling his hunting dog Sophie away from those grilled hotdogs and burgers. Right: Kevin Lipp cracking a cold one with Barry Green after lunch

Right: Todd Schotts paddles his fishing kayak in the lake at Multi Lakes Conservation Association at this year's picnic event. Left: One of the largemouth bass Schotts landed.





Michigan Fly Fishing Club News & Events

The Club Is Looking For A Zoomer

When Covid first reared its ugly head and we stopped meeting face-to-face, we started meeting via Zoom teleconferencing.

After we started meeting face-to-face again, we continued Zooming our meetings to stay connected with those fly fishers that are still sensitive to the Covid issues and with those that live too far away to attend meetings.

Despite the occasional technical difficulty (and the occasional incorrect link in the email blasts), this has work very well. Please remember to thank Barry Green when you see him for organizing and managing the Zooming

activity.

Barry has taken on other responsibilities in the club (he's the new treasurer) so we're looking for someone to take on the Zooming task.

The job duties are straight forward. You will be given access to a paid Zoom account (one that doesn't have the 40 minute time limit). On a monthly basis, create some zoom meeting links.

During the Speaker and Activity meetings you open the Zoom meeting and monitor the online session.

Easy-Peasy...

If you are interested please contact one of the board members.



Haven't these guys won before? Right: Peter Albertson went home with a 9-ft, 3-wt Wet Fly Element Rod and a Field & Stream wader bag as the raffle winner from the June meeting. Kevin Lipp won this Grand Prize wheeled travel case at the July MFFC meeting along with an ornament and fingerless gloves.

MFFC Adds Blogging to Its Website

How high-tech are we? MFFC has introduced blogging to make our website more interactive. Our first, club member Tom Doyle, is uploading occasional blogs covering his fly-fishing trip to central Oregon, a day of



Tom Doyle

the Au Sable and breaking fly rods. Tom is retired from the Ford Rouge River Plant and now spends his time heading north to Grayling to fish the Au Sable.

Want to blog? send an email to our webmasters.

2022 - 2023 Officers

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Mousing Around *A Night of Cat & Mouse on the Au Sable*

By Neil Wallace

It's like fishing Hex, and it isn't.

Mousing is at night, of course, when the larger brown trout shed their weariness and look to bulk up. There are no crowds, no boat tags on the water, no waders jockeying for position, just to wait and wait. No spinner fall, no hatchers, no regularly feeding fish.

When wading for mousing, it is quiet, that quiet that dark makes even more quiet.

Like Hex, knowing the stretch of river targeted is the key - where to wade safely, where to cast, where the fish usually are. Each cast is into this peaceful, sightless, harmless silence. With Hex, the target is a feeding fish, so the take is a joyful surprise, a mousing fish's take or miss is the startling shock of a wind-slammed door.

Until last night, all my mousing had been with a guide, so in a boat, with lessons from the best. Like there are just two casts, both to make the foam-fur lure glide a slow wake from the likely spots - log jams, submerged wood,



Neil Wallace

grass bank undercuts. Like make a wake, the opposite of drag-free drift. Like don't set the hook at the beaver-like smash; somehow have the patience to wait until the fish is felt. Like when they miss or refuse or just try to stun the prey, get the lure back on the water, quick, at the spot of the sound, because maybe, just maybe, they may take it.

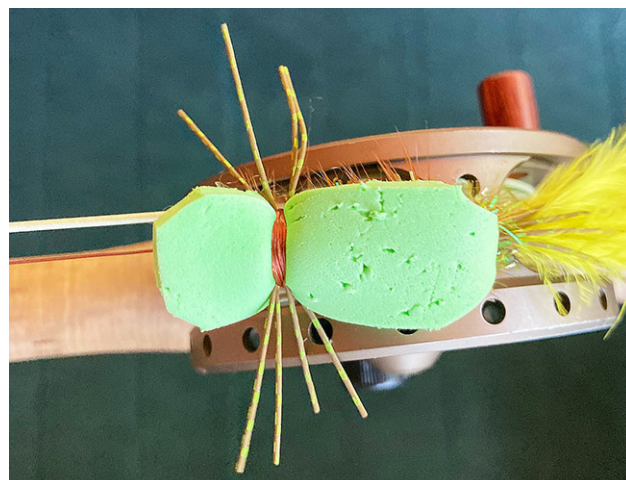
The guide trip the night before delivered plenty of action and fish to the net, but I paid closer attention this time so that I could try this unknown on my own.

There are very few places I know well enough to wade safely, only two of them likely hold many large trout. The one I chose for my maiden solo has a long, pathless, briar-filled, all-around difficult hike, that has been worth it in the past, more than once.

Less than five minutes in, near my line, there was an explosion that, any other time, I would have assumed was an upset beaver slapping its tail as a fear tactic. I cast back at it again and again, but nothing, so I moved on, later second guessing that perhaps it was a beaver.

Around the bend, another went off with the slightest feel on my line, I thought, triggering, I must admit, the set before I should have. A good lesson, as it turned out, be sure you're feeling the fish. But again, no return match to several put-back casts.

Down the straight, I slid to a



Neil Wallace's "mouse" fly with the teeth marks from a trout on it.

spot across from a likely log jam, under a bowing cedar, forcing a sort of weird overhead sidearm cast, nameless as far as I know. With so many casts into the night's blackness, I came to feel where the throw needed to go. With so many unseen drifts, I can feel the wake as it glides across the flat current, at least I think I do.

Then a hen trout makes a sound like a dropped bolder, breaking the silence. I gasp so as not to set too soon, then feel that Hex-like tug: she is on and headed to her log refuge. We wrestled until she was in the net, a day-maker who fought well above her weight class.

In the unexpected cold of a July night, I think to head back to the cabin and a wee dram for my success, but think again of that first fish or beaver and hike back upstream. Short version - it explodes by my line twice, but no take, no feel, no nothing.

So, back to fish number two, that hits on the first cast but refuses, or was just stunning, or whatever. I do the instructed short cast back to where I think he is, and he is, hammering it shark on seal, no need for me to set the hook, really no chance. A train posing as a race car, he is off with my line, determined. This trout took longer, fought harder, ran further, and filled my net even more. A month-maker, heck a season-maker for me just a few short sea-



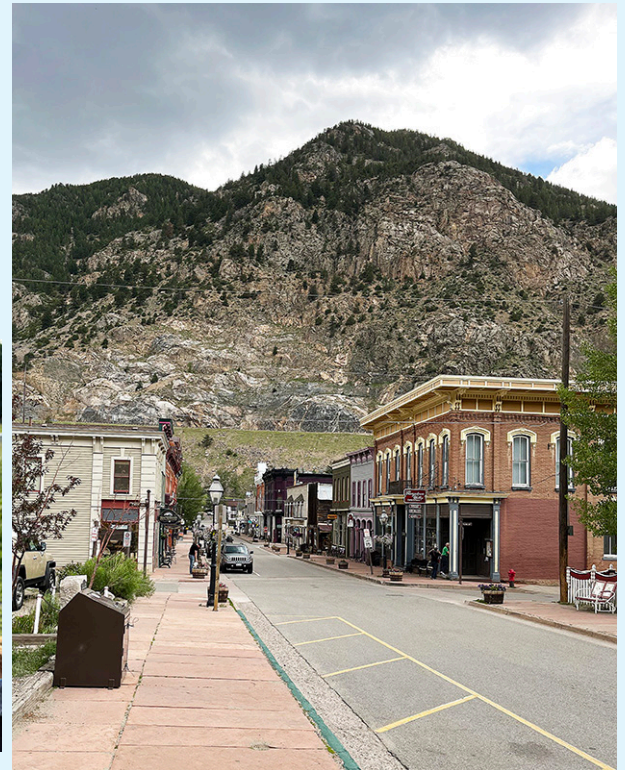
MFFC member Neil Wallace with a night-time trout from the Au Sable River.

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A Fish-Filled Summer . . .



Alpacas & Trout



MFFC members Carolyn Bennet and Mary Lou Rogala were in Colorado this summer where they hung out like cowgirls in downtown Georgetown (above right). They also befriended the locals at an alpaca farm in Silt (above), a VRBO where they stayed. "I felt like I was part of an old western movie," said Bennet.

Oh, they also went fishing. They floated the Colorado River west of Silt with Bennet catching an 18-inch brown trout (left). On the same float she also landed a cutthroat trout (above left).



Left: Scott Freeburg casts for trout on the Gallatin River during this year's MCFY Yellowstone Trip. Above: Indian Paintbrush flowers line Drew Lehman's "secret river spot." This year's outing covered three weeks and was still taking place when the September issue of the Evening Hatch was in production. A photo spread and more from the adventure will be featured in the October issue.

... for MCCF Members Everywhere



Big Rainbows & an Endless Sky

Bill Bocks enjoyed great fishing and superb scenery during a fishing trip to Wyoming this summer. Above: Bocks holds a 23-inch rainbow caught in the North Platte Miracle Mile as well as a 24-incher (bottom right). Both fish were caught on a size 20 Pennington baetis. Above right: A guide nets Bock's rainbow while mule deer and a bald eagle appear during their time on the North Platte. "It was pretty nice and very exciting to catch and bring (these fish) to net," said Bocks.



Right: Dave Oakley celebrated Fourth of July by catching this bass during the holiday weekend. He was using a jitterbug on Beebe Lake Boy Scout Camp near Clare.

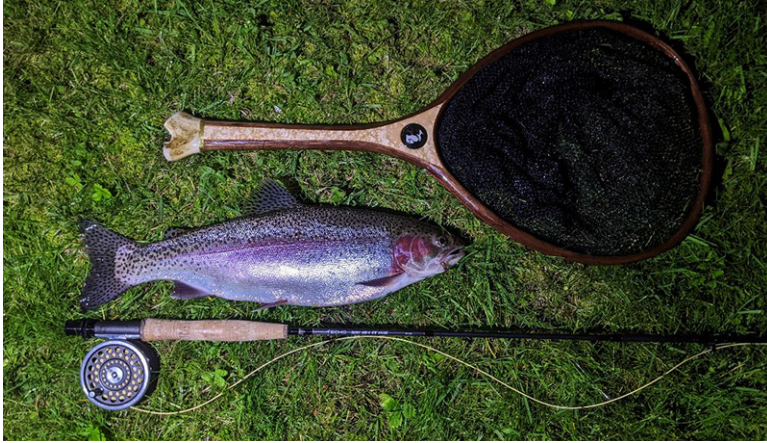
Left: "Check out this one I caught the other night," said Corey Thelan. The trout was landed in June from Black Earth Creek in Wisconsin Driftless area. It was fooled by a pheasant tail nymph.



The Sewrucks: A legacy of MFFC fly fishers

Like grandfather, like grandson. Tom Sewruck joined the MFFC not long after the club was formed in 1970 and traveled with the founding fathers on their globetrotting trips to Russia, the Bahamas and other exotic locations with fly rods in hand. This year his grandson, Jordan Sewruck, joined the club and attended his first MFFC banquet just days before turning 18.

"I just love Jordan's passion for the sport," said MFFC President Sybil Hunter. "He was excited at the banquet to talk fishing and show pictures on his and Tom's phone."



Above right: Tom Sewruck on the banks of the Au Sable in the Mio-Mckinley area. Above left: the Echo rod and net that Jordan Sewruck won at this year's MFFC banquet and an 18-inch rainbow he caught in June with his new equipment. Right: Jordan Sewruck with a rainbow from the Mio area of the Au Sable River. Left and bottom: Jordan and Tom Sewruck floated the Au Sable in late June, fishing from inflatable pontoon boats. "My favorite thing about fly fishing is hooking and reeling a fish in when they put up a good fight," said Jordan.



Fishin' with Eloise & What a 2-Year-Old Taught Me

By Jim DuFresne

A few years ago, I found my first fishing rod, a narrow piece of wood seven inches long with a ball of heavy braided line. At the end of the line were four split shots and a large hook. In the early 1960s, I used it to catch crayfish in the waters surrounding Elk Rapids, a northern Michigan village where my family has a cottage.

Last July, I pulled that "rod" out again, turned to Eloise, my 2-year-old granddaughter, and asked her, "do you want to go fishing?"

"Fishin'?" she said.

Like most members of our club, I will do anything to help somebody enter the world of fly fishing, knowing there is strength in numbers for the future of our sport and the preservation of our passion.

But I am even more determined to help kids discover fishing. There is so much that competes for their attention these days that I believe the younger you get a rod-hook-and-worm in their hands, the more likely they'll still be fishing as adults.

Ironically, I never saw my mentor fish. Ray Dye was a retired painter who lived most of his life in Elk Rapids and maintained a PO box there even after he and Aunt Della moved to an apartment in Traverse City.

He would show up almost every day to check his mail, talk with locals –

he was very sociable – and spend time at our cottage, where my Father would inevitably be trying to finish a repair on our 100-year-old house. Dad was way too polite to tell Ray he

had no time to talk. Instead, he would say "Jim you want Uncle Ray, to take you fishing?"

Bored with fetching tools, I was all in. I'd grab an old cane pole from the barn,

and we'd walk three blocks to the Elk River Dam in town, picking up a dozen leaf worms at a bait shop along the way.

There is a catwalk on the back side of the dam where anglers have always gathered, and Uncle Ray and I would soon be among them. I'd fish or tried to. My uncle would put one foot on the railing, lean back against the dam and smoke his pipe, chatting with whoever was nearby. Especially if they caught something.

I never remember getting much technical advice from my great uncle nor catching many fish. But occasionally, I'd pull up a crayfish, and that's all it took to hook me. I fashioned that first rod by borrowing what I needed from my Father's tacklebox without telling him, and then spent most of my free time tossing leftover leaf worms among the rocks that line Elk River.

"What that?" asked Eloise.

"It's our fishing rod but don't touch this hook, or you'll get an ouchie."

Eloise sat in the wagon with our equipment in



Jim DuFresne



Eloise, with a baited crayfish rod, ready to catch a trophy.

her plastic beach bucket; the rod with the dangerous hook and a withered hotdog I found in the back of the refrigerator. I quickly learned as a budding angler that a chunk of a hotdog would last much longer on the hook than a leaf worm. But even better bait were pieces of chicken necks I rummaged out of the garbage. Even as a six-year-old, I realized bigger bait catches bigger fish.

We followed a boardwalk along the river and when we reached a stretch of shaded rocks, Eloise hopped out of the wagon. We both stared into the clear water below us, she in that crouched position with her arms around her knees that only two-year-olds can do.

"Grandpa, where crayfish?" she asked.

"Under the rocks," I said. "They

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On a child's first fishing adventure, all they need is a line and a hook. Jim DuFresne's 50-year-old crayfish rod.

DuFresne: *For Kids the Love of Fishing Begins with a Small Crayfish*

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hide under the rocks.”

“Under the rocks,” she repeated.

I rigged up the hook, handed her the rod and told her she was in charge of line control. I tossed the bait into the water and gently began dragging it along the edges of rocks. It didn’t take long for a crayfish to appear and grab that hotdog end.

There is definitely a technique to catching crayfish. They are so determined to hang onto that hunk of meat you can slowly pull them up. But once a crayfish breaks the surface of the water, it realizes this is not where it wants to be, and quickly lets go. Thus the *Elk Rapids Yank & Swing*.

In one quick motion, you have to pop them out of the water while also swinging the line towards you. If successful, they will fall onto the boardwalk, where you can pick them up before they scoot back into the river.

I thought I had this one. I yanked it cleanly out of the river towards the boardwalk, but it dropped off three inches from the edge.

“Damn,” I said softly.

I realized two things at that moment. As an angler, what I crave most is the inherent challenge of outwitting my prey. Whether it is a 10-pound sockeye salmon from Alaska’s Russian River or a four-inch crayfish in Elk River, it doesn’t matter. It’s what I live for. Not to keep and kill, but to con and catch.

The other thing I learned were two-year-olds have an amazing ability for speech recognition. Or at least Eloise does. She must have said “under the rocks,” a dozen times during our 90-minute outing. But not this time.

After we watched the crayfish flutter back down to the bottom of the river and scurry into the rocks, we looked at each other and Eloise said “Damn!”

At first I was going to explain to her why Grandpa was so frustrated about losing an itty-bitty crayfish. Then I thought I should tell her why that wasn’t the best choice of words for me to use.

But that seemed like a lot to burden a two-year-old with. So I just put her in the wagon, hoping she’d forget the word – which I knew she wouldn’t – or at the very least not use it at an inappropriate moment in front of her par-



Eloise studies a “trophy” crayfish caught during her first experience fishing.

ents or at her daycare center.

At our next stop, we had better luck. A 5-incher landed cleanly on the boardwalk, and I grabbed it behind its outstretched claws before showing the wiggling trophy to Eloise. She was fascinated by what we caught. I dropped it in her bucket and managed a catch-and-release lesson, telling her it’s best to returned it to the river so we can

catch it again when it’s bigger.

Our final crayfish encounter was the best of the day. I was dragging the now beat-up hotdog end past a boulder when a huge claw suddenly emerged and grabbed it. It took a minute or two to work the crayfish out from under the rock, and when we did, we realized why. This one had to be 7 inches from the tip of its claws to the end of its tail. In the magnifying effect of rippling clear water, it looked like a small lobster.

Repeatedly I tried to raise it toward the surface for the “yank” but this old crawdad was not going to be fooled and let go halfway up every time. After the third attempt I just let the hot dog dangle there, as I pondered what to do, when from under the boardwalk, a huge bluegill appeared, studying the offering from only two inches away.

“What that?” Eloise asked excitedly.

“A big fish.”

“Big fish,” she repeated.

I would have given anything for that bluegill to take the unorthodox bait, but after a few seconds of jiggling it, the fish retreated from where it came.

Still, it was an exhilarating finish to Eloise’s first fishing adventure. And that evening when I went to say goodnight to her in bed, I asked her if she wanted to go again, and she nodded yes. Then just before her eyes closed to take her to wherever two-year-olds go in Dreamland she said “under the rocks.”

I can’t wait to take her belly boating.

Mousing for Trout in the Dark of Night

Continued from page 5

sons ago.

Obviously, I had to go back for the first fish. Obviously.

But “Crickets”, as they say, well, no, not even crickets. So silent, the dark is somehow even darker now. Like the disappointing calm when the Hex is done for the night or rather morning, it seemed over, two beautiful trout later over.

With a smile to light my way for the

long hike back, I am already, involuntarily, planning, plotting really, my return to this bend to give number one, one more chance.

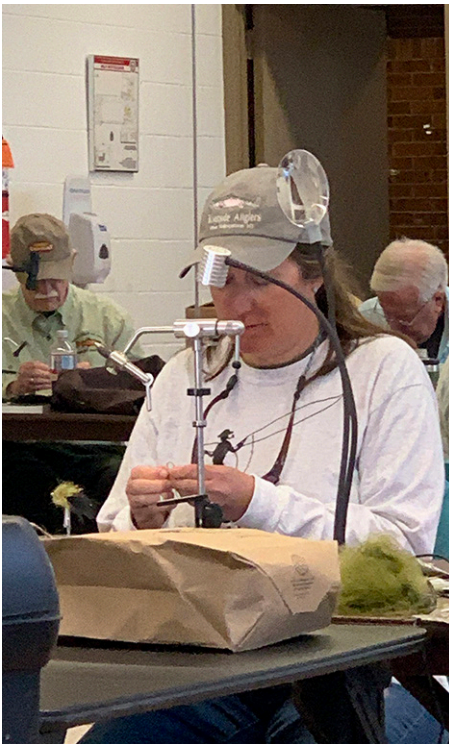
A “civilian” asked me why, with all the fishing I do (apparently it is apparent), I still go with guides. Sure, they do all the work, know the best spots, at all the best times, and put us on all the best fish. Really though, I do it to learn. There is always more to learn with this sport, this obsession, this life.

A Day with Alice *Banquet Speaker Charms MFFC Members*



Alice Owsley, a Montana guide and a contributing author of **Fly Fishing Yellowstone National Park**, spent a day with MFFC members in May as the featured speaker at the 2022 club banquet. In the afternoon Owsley hosted a tying class and then gave a presentation that evening at the banquet.

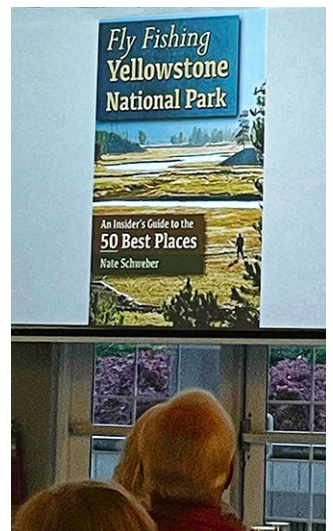
Far Left: Club tyers work on Montana fly patterns with Alice Owsley at the pre-banquet tying session. Left: Chris Hunter celebrates Owsley's birthday at the banquet by giving her a roach clip with the MFFC logo on it to display her flies.



An Alice Owsley streamer



Above Left: Alice Owsley works on a fly as she instructs the fly-tying session. Mark Mitchell and John Eriksson focus on their flies as well at the class (above right). Left: MFFC past presidents celebrate Owsley's birthday at the MFFC Right: Members watch Owsley's presentation that evening





MFFC Questions Camp Grayling Expansion

By Sybil Hunter
MFFC President

In 2021, Michigan was chosen as the new National Guard Intelligence and Electronic Warfare & Sensors battalion starting in 2026, also called NA-DWC (National All Domain Warfighting Center).

The Michigan National Guard currently leases 231 square miles of State land for Camp Grayling from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in which no money changes hands.

The National Guard has proposed leasing an additional 250 square miles that would more than double the current footprint of the military camp.

This proposed expansion would cover almost all of the State land available within Lovells Township, who's economy is based on hunting and fishing tourism, predominantly on State land. It would also incorporate sections of the Au Sable, Manistee and Muskegon Rivers, plus additional wetlands.

According to the National Guard, usage of these new lands will be labeled "low impact" in the same way the current camp usage started.



National guard soldiers head out on a training exercise at Camp Grayling (photo courtesy Grayling Chamber of Commerce).

For multi-dominion operations, this land's anticipated usage is an industrial collaboration to test commercial weaponry/warfare products. They have already built 1,500-foot-long buffers between military and civilian usage.

Despite the expansion not yet complete, troops in military vehicles are already traveling residential roads to reach river access sites – considered a

part of the buffer zones. Plus additional roads are being damaged by heavy military vehicle usage, leaving taxpayers to foot the repair bill.

This matter will be brought to the MFFC Board for discussion at the September Board meeting. If you would like to attend the meeting to listen or provide feedback, please contact a Board member.

Camp Grayling Background Information, Reports & Stories

Scan the QR codes to read articles, Q&As and reports in regards to the Camp Grayling expansion.



The Michigan DNR Press release about extending the public comment period for the proposed expansion.



An interactive map of the proposed expansion from the DNR that allows you to leave comments on areas of concern.



The original white paper supplied by Camp Grayling to the DNR in regards to the proposed expansion.



An excellent feature from MLive covering the issues, history of the camp and the ensuing controversy over expansion.



An early press release from state of Michigan and the DNR in announcing the lease and expansion



An article that appeared in the Traverse City Record Eagle about Kalkaska county leaders passing a resolution opposing the expansion.



An article from the Crawford County Avalanche about local environmental groups and boards who oppose the expansion.



The Anglers of the Au Sable letter to DNR Director Dan Eichinger notifying him of their opposition to the expansion.



A Q&A white paper released by the DNR after the first public hearing in June and the controversy that had erupted.

What Others Say

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

Although we have many concerns, there is a threshold question we believe the DNR must require the Guard to answer to be consistent with the DNR's mission statement.

For months, members of our Foundation have been attending DNR and Michigan National Guard presentations and gathering information on the proposal of the Guard to more than double the size of Camp Grayling to approximately 484 square miles, for electromagnetic warfare testing and training, which they sometimes refer to as cyber warfare.

Although we have many remaining questions and concerns about this proposal, our Board's initial focus is opposition because of the lack of information demonstrating that this very significant expansion is truly necessary.

From information we have, we believe the Guard could conduct these activities on its existing 231 square miles.

This was the specific initial position we adopted at a special meeting of the Board:

The Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation is opposed to the proposed Camp Grayling lease expansion of 253 square miles, more than doubling the size and encroaching on fragile wetlands, as unnecessary and inconsistent with the mission statement of the MDNR which is "to conserve, protect, manage, use, and enjoy our great State's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations." The critical values expressed in this mission statement should be given extraordinarily strong weight considering the enormity of the proposal and its potential impacts.

This expansion should not even be considered, and no further investigation of the appropriateness of it should occur unless and until the following threshold question is answered to the satisfaction of the MDNR and the constituents of Michigan, in a detailed and convincing manner:

Why can't the National Guard use currently available tools such as scheduling, geographic separation, geofencing, and other reasonable measures, to perform its intended electromagnetic warfare testing and training within its existing management agreement footprint of 231 square miles?

So, we believe they can perform this training on their existing lands. More importantly, they have yet to demonstrate publicly that the training needs this additional space.

Can they meet this test. They need to be put to it. Otherwise, we will never know that this is a need, not just a "want."

What MFFC Members Say

"We had 9 boats, Zodiacs, with army guys in it armed with M-50s going down the Manistee river in the afternoon. It was North of yellow trees and down that stretch past our house, downstream from our house." **Jim Montagne**

"They just haven't proven they can be good stewards of the land given their history. My house in Grayling is only 3 miles from the main training facility. That is one of the places where they had PFAS contamination. I get helicopters that fly over every day. It's the way it's always been. The fact that they want to expand is (a huge impact)" **Jeff McGowan**

"They are pushing the limits to get things okayed. They are just not giving you the whole story, what happens 5 years, 10 years down the road with the changes they want to make?" **Terry Herron**



Eight National Guard soldiers were photographed this summer rafting down the Manistee River with weapons.

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

MUCC opposes the expansion of Camp Grayling except in a national emergency, per a 1989 resolution.

MUCC's primary concern is the resource-drain that will be expended to undertake a review of this magnitude with no promise of compensation from the federal government.

"The DNR review process will take at least a year," said Justin Tomei, MUCC policy assistant. "That is a year of shifted staff priorities, a year of added expense, a year of the department working on military priorities rather than for the citizens of Michigan."

Another MUCC concern is the additional impact on the land and wildlife as an unnecessary burden to the DNR and constituents who utilize, manage and protect it.

According to an FAQ document released by the National Guard, "low impact or light maneuver training consists of foot traffic, tents, bivouacking and porta-johns. Vehicle travel will be restricted to current state forest roads and trails."

Considering light impact by the National Guard, there is a distinct difference between state lands and roadways currently utilized by military personnel from Camp Grayling and those not in terms of habitat and road degradation.

"MUCC feels that this lease expansion or proposal does not fall in line with the DNR's mission statement, our organization's core values and does not represent a risk we feel is acceptable for the waters, wildlife and access Michiganders cherish," Tomei said.

Lastly, the department is ordered to keep open state hunting land via an amended 2009 statute unless certain circumstances are met.

"For me there are two very troubling aspects to this expansion; the apparent plans to let the land be used by defense contractors to test and the increasing number of other states and other countries training here. Are these drivers for the expansion?"

The Base Commander has stated that there is no plan to rent out any of the proposed expansion land to private industries but added that he can't rule that out. Velocity Management Solutions, out of Ann Arbor, is one company already marketing the Camp to defense contractors as "A great place to 'dress rehearsal'."

In a recent exercise, Northern Strike, troops from 19 states and several other countries trained in Michigan. How has the base expanded from hosting troops from Michigan and neighboring states to hosting troops from over a third of our country and from other countries?" **Kevin Lipp**

Rock Snot Invades Boardman & Manistee Rivers

By the Michigan DNR and The Evening Hatch

The Michigan DNR reported this week a second river in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula is experiencing nuisance didymo growth; the Boardman. Ed McCoy of Mangled Flies Outfitters says there is another; the Manistee.

Anglers and McCoy have also sent in warnings and photos to the Evening Hatch saying that rock snot was blooming above CCC Bridge. They found significant growth between CCC Bridge and Yellow Tree Landing.

"I suspect it will bloom as high as M-72, maybe higher," said McCoy. "At this point it's safe to say it's in every section of the river. So make sure you thoroughly clean your fishing gear before heading to another body of water."

Meanwhile the Michigan DEGL&E has confirmed the presence of didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*), a nuisance alga also known as rock snot, in a stretch of the Boardman River in Blair Township in Grand Traverse County.

Blooms of didymo, a microscopic single-celled alga, were detected on the Upper Manistee River in Kalkaska

County in December 2021 and have been found in the St. Marys River in the Upper Peninsula since 2015.

A photo of suspected didymo posted Aug.17 on a Michigan Sportsman online forum was forwarded to EGLE and Department of Natural Resources staff the next day.

Sarah LeSage, EGLE aquatic invasive species program coordinator, visited Shumsky's Canoe Launch and a bridge access off East River Road in Blair Township Aug. 22 to collect samples, which were verified the next day by the Great Lakes Environmental Center.

Points on the Boardman River, including Shumsky's launch, were surveyed in May as a part of a 12-river didymo survey in northern Michigan following the detection on the Upper Manistee. At that time, didymo was not found on the Boardman or any additional rivers.

Midwest Invasive Species Information Network



If you observe didymo, note the location and report it via the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network, available online at MISIN.MSU.edu or as a downloadable smartphone app. The MISIN smartphone app will take a GPS location point if a report is made at the site; it also will allow you to upload photos.



Rock Snot: New signs reminding users to "Clean, Drain, Dry" are posted at access sites along the Upper Manistee. Similar outreach measures will be taken along the Boardman River.



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