



The Evening

# Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

March 2024

## What a Wonderful Weekend

### Michigan Fly Fishing Club Calendar



Mac Brown demonstrates fly casting techniques at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo.

**3/20/24** Speaker Meeting, Jordyn Stoll of Michigan Trout Unlimited; Invasive Species Ecology & Didymo

**4/3/24** Speaker Meeting, Steve Haywood from HFF Custom Rods

**4/6/24** Trout Tune-up, Huron River, Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center

**4/10/24** Board Meeting, Virtual

**4/17/24** Activity Meeting, Joe Sprys

**4/13/24** Member's School, Wayne County Community College Ted Scott Campus

**4/20/24** Scout School, Multi Lakes Conservation Association

**4/27/24** Trout Opening Day & Remembrance, Gates Au Sable Lodge

**5/1/24** Activity Meeting, Dan Walker

**5/4/24** Youth School, Tollgate Farm

**5/5-7/24** Old Member's Outing, Wawa Sum Lodge, Grayling

**5/8-11/24** Dick Schot New Member's Outing, Wawa Sum Lodge, Grayling

**5/8/24** Board Meeting, Virtual

**5/15/24** MFFC Club Banquet, Italian American Banquet Center, Livonia, speaker Dirk Fischbach

**5/16-19/24** Smallmouth Outing, Blue Spruce Motel, Port Austin

**6/20/24** MFFC Club Picnic, Multi Lakes Conservation Club, Commerce

**7/27/24 to 8/3/24** First week: Yellowstone-Montana Trip, Driftwaters Resort

**8/3-10/24** Second week: Yellowstone-Montana Trip, Driftwaters Resort

**8/10-17/24** Third week: Yellowstone-Montana Trip, Driftwaters Resort

Meetings are held at Clarenceville Middle School, 20210 Middlebelt, Livonia.

Well, that was fun. The Midwest Fly Fishing Expo was a huge success this spring and continued its return to the glory days before the pandemic suspended the event for three years.

You won't believe what famous celebrity was spotted shopping at the Expo for a new fly fishing vest! Check our two-page photo essay on **pages 5-6** for a picture of him.

In her President's Message column on **page two**, Sybil Hunter tells us about the trials and tribulations of being a headliner gofer. This year, she was tagging along with Michael Mauri and loved every minute of it.

Jim DuFresne spent the weekend searching for the most innovative products from small businesses trying to break into a challenging market. He found four great ones at the Expo; you can read about them on **page 7**.

On **page 9**, Jeff McGowan penned another piece about a legendary Michigan fishing lodge, the Wa Wa Sum on the Au Sable River. McGowan was up against the deadline, so during a long-winded staff meeting at work he pulled his fishing journal out of his briefcase and began handwriting the article.

His boss noticed him scribbling and later complimented him on being the only one there taking notes. Way to go Jeff, we hope you get a raise for that!



Jeff McGowan's fishing journal.

## The President's Message...

# Hustling to Keep the Headliners Happy at Our Expo

Volunteers make the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo work. And make it fun. Thank goodness for the latter because the Expo is a lot of work.

I have volunteered with many of you for years in different jobs, from set-up to recruiting (or hawking pins) at the Club booth. However, I have had the absolute treat of being a speaker handler for the last three shows.

Yes, you know what I mean: a celebrity gofer. Searching for a cup of hot coffee with cream, water bottles, courtesy runs, watching luggage, and keeping schedules are part of it. But the best part is meeting and spending the day with new and highly talented people. Most headline speakers know each other from the road – ironically, we are the outsiders – which can be entertaining, too.

During lunch Sunday, Michael Mauri surreptitiously leaned over, asking for a water bottle for his next presentation. I quietly pointed to an empty wall, realizing just then they were gone.

“Hang tight. I’ll find you one,” I said, dashing out the door. I came back five-plus minutes later, triumphantly plopping down a bottle of water next to Michael.

The room was silent. I looked up and Phil Rowley was frowning at me. “Where’s mine? I thought you liked me?” said Phil with a Poker Face that



Sybil Hunter

would have scared everybody else into folding. There was a dramatic, if, somewhat awkward, pause before I said tentatively. “How about I go get you one?”

Alice Owsley suddenly broke the silence: “You know he’s been waiting this entire time to say that.” We all erupted in laughter, headliners, and outsiders.

You learn so much when you spend a day with a headliner. How to effectively construct an Olympic-quality Czech nymphing line, nuanced casting tricks, and even geography and history lessons. Did you know some saltwater species make popping noises?

Then, there was my struggle with the misbehaving digital projector. I won’t mention how I tracked down the audio/video assistant or in my panic was madly pushing all the buttons hoping that one was the on button to make a projector work. Or even worse, watching Kevin Lipp calmly flick a switch and suddenly there was giant fish on the screen (I assure you, I’ll never hear the end of that).

There is also built-in chaos. That’s where it gets especially entertaining.

In the past, I’ve had to steal cheese-cake, sneak out coffee, sort through ice bins for a specific pop, set up cords, and guard things. Oh, and pick up trash.

One year the speakers piled their lunch remnants in the center of the table. The teacher in me was twitching...I had to....I JUST HAD TO CLEAN THAT TABLE. I waited as long as I could then dove in, gathered it up – with my bare hands! – and tossed the mess in the trash bin with a resounding thunk! Satisfied like the freshman teacher that I was, I turned around and realized they all were staring at me in bemusement.

This Expo, I was assigned to Michael and Emily Mauri.

If any of you know



Sybil Hunter and headliner Michael Mauri.

me, you know that I had to overcome microphone fear, and I get easily star-struck. At a book signing once, I was asked for my name, and all I could do was giggle. Eventually, someone shoved a Post-it and a pen at me. I stared at it in wonderment. “What’s your name?” they asked. I had no idea, but I scribbled Sybil on the sticky note. Giggling, of course.

Fast forward to the Friday before opening day.

Five lanes deep at Detroit Metro Airport, illegally parked for traffic arriving for domestic travelers, I was desperately searching for Michael. While sitting there thinking, “How am I ever going to find...” a man towering over the cars appeared in a bright yellow jacket and camo shorts. Alleluia!

Michael settled into the car and said, “My wife bought me this jacket. She said I couldn’t wear my 10-year-old one.” Thank you, Emily. Life is good.

Then, panic. Calibrating the GPS

*Continued on page 4*



What goes on in the Headliner’s lunchroom, stays in the Headliner’s lunchroom; Phil Rowley and Mac Brown.

# Michigan Fly Fishing Club Business

## Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting February 14, 2024

### Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:30 p.m.

*Present:* S. Hunter; K. Lipp; J. Deputat; B. Green; J. Aitken; J. Eriksson; J. Bada; J. Aukee; N. Tabaka

*Absent:* B. Strachan

*Visitors:* Christopher Corden

**Approval of Agenda** – Agenda from 2/14/24 approved

**Approval of Minutes** – Meeting-minutes for 1/17/24 approved.

### Visitor's Business

**President:** S. Hunter

- Introduction to On the Mend - Christopher Corden. Corden is seeking school aged participants who have dealt with medical/handicap/emotional issues to attend the June 8 program. Students are introduced to fly fishing, given training, taken on the river, and presented with equipment for them and their parent/guardian. Please send candidates to him.

### Officer's Report

**President:** S. Hunter

- Jim DuFresne working on The Evening Hatch.
- Steve Haywood from HFF Custom Rods is our April 3 speaker.
- Christopher Corden would like to present "On the Mend" to the club, in hopes to find students to attend.

**Vice President:** K. Lipp

- The last Evening Hatch was especially well done.

**Treasurer:** B. Green

- Expo Booth income arriving.
- For January we are ahead of last year.
- Membership income is up.

- Raffle is doing well.

**Membership:** J. Deputat

- 508 renewal letters mailed last July with 136 returned (40%)
- 407 current active members
- 47 former members from 2022
- 54 former members 2021
- 12 new members
- Member surveys mailed to 407 current members.
- As of Feb. 14, 348 members (86%) have paid their dues, 81% by check.

**Corresponding Secretary:** J. Bada

- Eblasts: 4 monthly meeting announcements; 2 special announcements; 1 Hatch announcement.
- Contacts: 309, open rate: 77%.
- Upcoming Speakers: March: Jordyn Stoll of T.U.; April: open; May Banquet: Dirk Fischbach; June: open.
- Assistance required to find spring 2024 speakers.

### Events

- Member school – proposed new venue, Ted Scott Campus of WCCC (Haggerty and Ecorse Roads)

### New Business

- Election committee looking potential officers, but one has stepped up to run for office.
- Board of Directors Kevin requesting a job description from each of the board members
- Contract for the Vintage House extended through 2026.

### Old Business

- Volunteers are needed, to fill in occasionally for ZOOM.
- The Ultimate show had 15 new volunteers. 300 kids tied.
- Still looking for an Editor for The Evening Hatch

**Adjournment:** 8:44 p.m.

## 2023-2024 Officers

**President:**

**Sybil Hunter**  
*president@mffc.org*

**Vice President:**

**Kevin Lipp**  
*kjlipp@gmail.com*

**Corresponding Secretary:**

**Jon Bada**  
*correspondence@mffc.org*

**Recording Secretary:**

**John Eriksson**  
*recordingsecretary@mffc.org*

**Treasurer**

**Barry Green**  
*treasurer@mffc.org*

**Membership**

**Jerry Deputat**  
*membership@mffc.org*

**Immediate Past President:**

**Bruce Strachan**  
*bruced0402@gmail.com*

## At-Large Directors

**Jim Aitken**

*dznvnm@gmail.com*

**John Aukee**

*j.aukee@yahoo.com*

**Norm Tabaka**

*ntabaka@gmail.com*

## Hatch Editors

**Sybil Hunter** Submissions

*evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com*

**Jim DuFresne** Production

*kidven@aol.com*

## Webmaster

**Sybil Hunter** Club Webmaster

*sybilsypemail@gmail.com*

## Time to Tune-Up For Trout Season

Gather with fellow MFFC members for our annual Trout Tune-up, an early season test of your equipment, skills, and luck on the Huron River at Proud Lake State Recreation Area. The event will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 6 at the Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center, 3577 Sleeth Court, Commerce Township.

Thousands of rainbow and brown trout planted by the Michigan DNR will test your cunning and catch-and-release skills. MFFC will be your host at the Outdoor Education Center's "Yurt" adjacent to the river, providing coffee, soft drinks, donuts, and hot-stove conversation.

The event is free but a valid 2024 All-Species Michigan fishing license is REQUIRED to fish.

Intrigued by this "Fly Fishin' Thing?" Non-club visitors are welcome. The Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center is located on the south side of Sleeth Rd midway between North Wixom Road and Bass Lake Road on Sleeth Court. This is on the northern border of Proud Lake Recreation Area.

## Fly Tyer's Desk of the Month



This month's fly tying room comes from Louis Preston. Very neat and well organized we thought.

Want to feature your tying bench? Just snap a picture or two and please add a few words about that favorite corner in your home. Email everything to Sybil Hunter at [evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com](mailto:evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com).



The beloved Yurt; always filled during the Trout Tune-up with questionable advice and healthy snacks to get you back out in the rain.



## Welcome New MFFC Members

Please reach out to our new members and welcome them. Contact information is available on the current membership roster, or from Jerry Deputat at [membership@mffc.org](mailto:membership@mffc.org).

New MFFC Members this year:

Gregory Bajuk	Steve Fairbanks	David Kunselman
<i>Farmington Hills</i>	<i>Rockford</i>	<i>Oxford</i>
Kenneth Ball	Jess Farris	Michelle Potas
<i>Grayling</i>	<i>Redford</i>	<i>Farmington Hills</i>
Sophia Brueckner	Eugene Fattore	Alan Prettyman
<i>Howell</i>	<i>Detroit</i>	<i>Dearborn</i>
Brian Callahan	Adam Guinn	Mark Romzick
<i>Livonia</i>	<i>Orion Township</i>	<i>Atlanta, GA</i>
Doug Cornell	Douglas Hurd	Nick Sekulich
<i>Howell</i>	<i>Romulus</i>	<i>Beverly Hills</i>
Lynda Dowding	Mark Johnson	Tom Trader
<i>Jackson</i>	<i>East Lansing</i>	<i>Howell</i>

## Sybil Hunter: Being a Celebrity Gofer at the Midwest Expo Is No Easy Task

*Continued on page 2*

on the fly, I discovered it would take 53 minutes to get to the venue. The realization that not only do I have to navigate unfamiliar traffic across metro Detroit through multiple construction zones, but I also had to carry on a coherent conversation.

Oh, my gawd, I have to multitask!

For the record, Michael is the consummate conversationalist. There was one, "Wow, people drive crazy here," which I am certain was aimed at a car wedging itself in front of us at dangerous speeds with little clearance from the orange cones. I comforted myself in knowing that even if it was me, Dan Finstad's driving was much scarier. Finns

drove through the Metro Airport pick-up area like it was bumper cars at the carnival.

There was also the moment where Michael stopped mid-sentence, looked at me flummoxed and said, "My butt is hot." After THAT was solved – I forgot Chris had left the seat heater on high – I dropped him off at the hotel to meet his wife.

All was well until the next day. Michael said the headlines needed to talk about "the dead cow in the room," and somebody said "you mean elephant in the room" and the fun started all over again

Tight wraps and happy whip finishes,  
Sybil



# Expo Moments *Four Days of Fun, Heavy Lifting & a Lot of Fishing Tales*



**A Star-Studded Expo** Brad Pitt of "A River Runs Through It" fame was seen shopping at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo for a new vest and a carry-all.



Carl Hueter of Wanigas Rod Co. relaxes at the end of a long Expo day by testing his own handcrafted bamboo fly rod at the casting pond. Wanigas was Trout Unlimited co-founder Art Neumann's original fly shop in Saginaw.



**Whose Grabbing The Money?** Chris Hunter and Bob Deputat in the ticket booth.



Al Ritt talks to an angler while tying flies at his Expo booth.

**Smallmouth Ways** James Hughes of Schultz Outfitters gives a presentation "Moving Water Smallmouth" to a full crowd in the Gymnasium at the Expo.



**Headliners Head Home** Michael Mauri, Phil Rowley, Alice Owsley, with Mike Loebel driving, headed to Detroit Metro Airport after a full weekend of casting and presenting.

# A Shop-A-Thon *Vendors and Volunteers Hustle to get the Expo Ready*



*Left: Either that sign is getting heavier or we're getting older; Bill Shannon, John Aukee, Keith Niemi and Spence Vanderhoof. Right: Larry Webb and Al Sprinkle - the Pond Scum Crew.*



## Tough Task: Setting Up the Expo

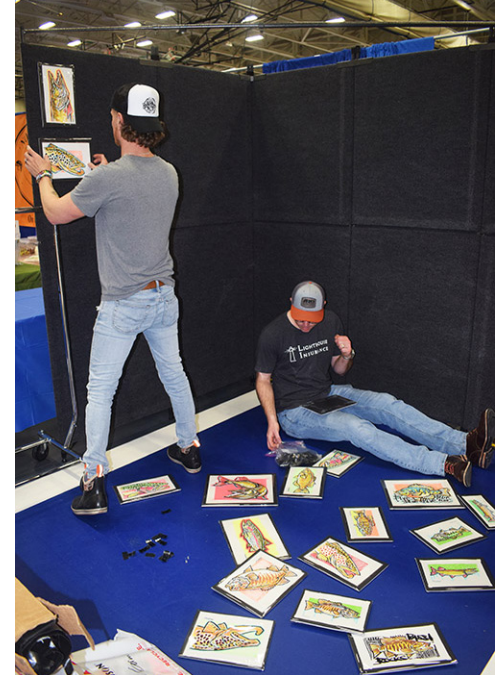
The MFFC volunteers prepped the Macomb Community College Sports Center for Expo on Thursday. This year, the crew had most of the tables, booths, curtains, and half of the casting ponds set up.

On Friday, the vendors arrive. The Gates Au Sable Lodge crew departed Grayling early in the morning with two rental trucks full of boxes of merchandise.

"We move most of the store down here," said Josh Greenberg of Gates Au Sable Lodge. "Sometimes it takes us 10 hours to set. This year, we did it in seven."

"We take 50 percent off the walls of the store, pack it up, and come down here," said James Hughes of Schultz Outfitters, who reserved the space of eight booths. "I'm exhausted after this show."

*Left: Joe Jelsomeno sets up a pair of waders at the Motor City Anglers booth.*



*MFFC volunteer, Dave Nowicki, is patiently waiting at the Club booth for the doors to open and a flood of fly anglers to come streaming into the Expo.*



*The Badger Creek Fly Tying team drove in from upstate New York and on Saturday set up their offering across the space of five booths.*

# Better Mousetraps *Entrepreneurs Bring New Ideas to the Expo*

By **Jim DuFresne**

You expect Sage, Scientific Anglers, Simms, and Hardy to be staffing booths at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo with their latest rods, reels, and fly lines.

But squeezed in between the big names of the fly fishing world were a lot of small businesses with new, clever, and innovative offerings.

Game changers? Probably not. But you have to love their entrepreneurial spirit and desire to make our passion an easier one to enjoy.

It doesn't always take a \$1000 rod; sometimes, just a \$20 gizmo can make your afternoon much more pleasant on the water.

Here are four that caught my eye at the Expo. I pulled my credit card out for two of them that weekend and probably will again for the others by year's end.

**Cling Fishing Products:** Jared May drove two days from Montana to Macomb County just to display his Mag



Grab, a quick and hassle-free magnetic clamp-on fly patch.

He utilizes high-strength, rare-earth magnets to avoid losing your flies while standing in the Au Sable. A matching steel plate allows you to easily attach it to a vest, waders, sling pack, hat, or the pockets of your float tube to securely hold everything from flies and lures to forceps, nippers, and pliers.

I'm telling you, a sheepskin patch with a pin is a thing of the past.

He has three sizes, which begin at \$20, and larger ones are on the way for drift boats and rafts. Check them out at [www.clingfishing.com](http://www.clingfishing.com).

**EZEYEFY:** None of us are getting any younger, so Randy Schademann has developed EZEYEFY hooks featuring slightly larger eyelets than normal hooks, making them easier to thread a tippet.

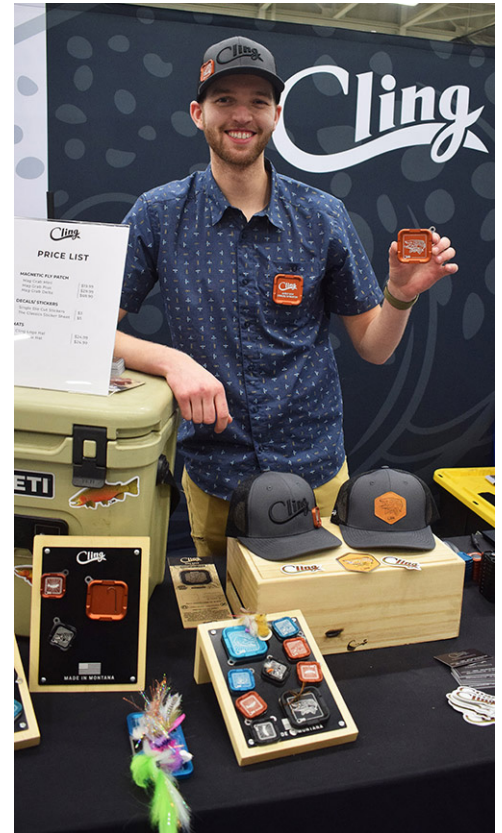
With easier-to-see eyelets, you can still swap flies whether you're in low-light conditions on the river or to accommodate diminishing eyesight when tying your favorite patterns at home.

"I'm convinced that the trout don't care (about the larger eyes)," Schademann said. "Look I'm from Lawrence, Kansas, so I have to drive hours before I can get to a trout stream. My eyes are already

*The Catch-All Universal Cart from Suspenz will easily transport your fishing kayak to wherever there are trout.*



*Jim DuFresne*



*Above: Jared May displays his Mag Grab, a quick and hassle-free magnetic clamp-on fly patch.*

*Above Center: The high-strength, rare-earth magnets utilize a steel plate to easily attach to waders as well as a vest, sling pack, hat, or the pockets of your float tube.*

tired by the time I get there."

EZEYEFY offers long-shank (sizes 12 to 16), standard dry (14 to 22), and curved shank nymph hooks (18 to 22). A dozen are \$6, and more sizes and styles are coming.

**Suspenz:** This Atlanta-based company offers a wide range of kayak, canoe and stand-up paddle storage and transport systems. The carts, roof racks, portable stands, and storage systems for walls, ceilings, and docks are well designed and superior to anything I have used in the past.

What caught my eye at the Expo was their Catch-All Universal Cart. It has airless, 12-inch tires and bunker bars that are adjustable up to 15 inches

*Continued on page 9*



# Small But Innovative; New Businesses Bring New Products

*Continued from page 8*

wide and rotate 90 degrees on the cart to accommodate however you want to load a fishing kayak on it.

Add a low-lift kickstand, heavy-duty four-point tie downs, and the option to order over-inflated beach tires for soft sand and this cart is a bargain at \$189. To see or purchase Suspenz carts and other products contact its Michigan dealer Heavner Canoe & Kayak Rental of Milford (248-685-2379).

**Broken Twig Landing Nets:** Chris LeMessurier has two passions in life: hockey and fishing. So it shouldn't surprise anybody that he was selling handcrafted fishing nets at the



*Above: Randy Schademann and his EZEYEFly hooks that feature slightly larger eyelets than normal hooks.*

*Left: Chris LeMessurier of Broken Twig Landing Nets with two of his fishing nets that feature recycled hockey sticks.*

Expo that feature recycled hockey sticks as handles.

"A broken hockey stick is usually thrown away," said LeMessurier of Bloomfield Hills. "But they are light and strong, making them great handles for fishing nets.

"I coach hockey and my kids play hockey, so I have access to a lot of broken hockey sticks."

Net handles range in length from 16 to 42 inches and in price from \$79 to \$135. For the diehard hockey fan, LeMessurier also has nets utilizing broken Red Wing, New York Rangers, and University of Michigan sticks.

## Support the Small Guys

In case you missed any of these fine vendors at the Expo scan their QR codes to check out their products on their websites.



Suspenz



Cling Fishing Products



Broken Twig Landing Nets



EZEYEFly



## Fun for All at the Expo Kids' Corner

The children at the Expo Kid's Corner had a great time painting aquatic themed t-shirts, tying Woolly Buggers and flinging a fly rod at their designated end of a casting pond.

So did the volunteers who were there helping them.

"I think I enjoy it as much as the children!" said Ken Gribble, who helped the young lady on the right paint a fish mold and then print a t-shirt with it.

To the left four-year-old Abel is finishing up his fish mold. He decided that his bluegill needed a few more colors.





# Wa Wa Sum *A Shrine Devoted to the Love of Fly Fishing in Michigan*



**T** By Jeff McGowan

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club is fortunate to be a part of the history of one of the great old lodges on the AuSable – Wa Wa Sum. The lodge is on the Holy Water just off Whirlpool Road, six miles east of Grayling. According to literature from Michigan State University, which now owns it, “Wa Wa Sum means ‘Plain View’ in the Ojibwa language and was given to the Camp in 1905 by Chief David Shoppenagon.”

Chief “Shopp” built the first cabin, now the dining room, in 1880. Other buildings were added as the years went by. Rube Babbit, Michigan’s first conservation officer, built the Administration Building. The main lodge, known as the Big Camp, was completed in 1922. It has a massive fieldstone fireplace with a stuffed moose overhead. Michigan State uses the property as a research facility and also rents out Wa Wa Sum to organizations with conservation or education agendas.

The MFFC holds two outings per year at Wa Wa Sum: The Dick Schot

New Member Outing in May and the Family Outing in July.

When I joined the Club, Dick Schot was the chairman of the New Member Outing, and it was renamed in his honor after he passed away. There would usually be an even mixture of new members and Club veterans who would serve as guides. Newbies and their “guides” would be paired up to fish together. Kevin Lipp has fond memories of being paired up with Dave Begley at his first outing.



Jeff McGowan

After I had been in the Club for a few years, I also served as a guide. There was one particularly memorable outing when it rained all weekend. We didn’t do much actual fishing, but Art Mikkola and I decided to take the new guys to various access sites so they could at least get familiar with the AuSable and Manistee Rivers.

Art took us to a spot on the upper Manistee. As we got out of the trucks, we pulled up the hoods of our rain jackets. Art flipped up the window of

MFFC members gather in the “Big Camp” room at the Wa Wa Sum Lodge to tie flies, talk fishing and reminiscence. The historic lodge is now the site of two annual MFFC outings.

his truck cap. Reaching into his cooler, he pulled out V8 juice, vodka, and red plastic cups. Art asked, “Who wants a Bloody?” He turned and pointed a finger at each of us in turn. We all nodded yes in return. We drank those Bloody Marys sheltered from the rain under the open truck cap window.

That night after dinner, we gathered around Wa Wa Sum’s “Big Camp” table to tie flies. Usually, at the New Member Outing, we invite a local fly tyer to spin a bobbin with us. That year, I think it was Sam Surre. Art brought out some Guinness and Bass Ale to make Black and Tans. They were such a hit that one of our members, Robin, volunteered to go on a beer run when we ran out of Guinness. She saved the weekend.

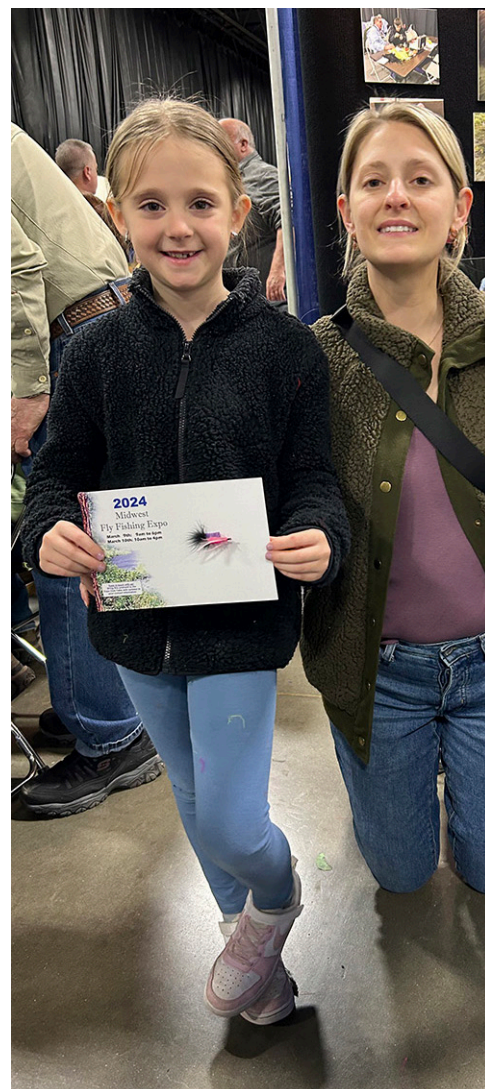
If you would like to be a part of the Wa Wa Sum Family Outing, The Dick Schot New Member Outing, or the New Old Member Outing, see the Club website at [www.mffc.org](http://www.mffc.org).



**Then & Now** Above: the backside of the Wa Wa Sum Lodge in a photo from the 1920s. Right: the lodge as it appears today. The first buildings at the camp were constructed in 1880.



# Kids Galore *And a Lot of Impressive Woolly Buggers at Outdoorama*



## Meet The Herz Family

Center: Five-year-old Henry holding his just-tied Woolly Bugger with his dad, Eric Herz, at Outdoorama. To the right is his mom, Jessica Herz, with his sister, seven-year-old Grace, and her fly from the MFFC kids booth.

“We’re a big fishing family and fish for walleye mostly out of Caseville in the spring and Saginaw Bay in the summer,” said Eric Herz. “Grace caught a 26-inch walleye last summer, which is currently the boat record.” The family that casts together stays together.

“I’ve been fishing for five years, like forever,” said Grace. “Walleye is my favorite to catch.”

We can see why.

Her father was not going to be outdone by his daughter, however. He landed a 45.5-inch, 24-pound muskie in December on Lake St Clair.

“I was fishing with Mike Martin and taking full advantage of the warmer weather,” said Eric Herz.

Left: Also tying his first fly at the MFFC booth was Landon, who has been playing organized hockey for nine years

but also loves fishing and conceded, “I like catching bass best.”



Above: Mark Stephens of MSU’s Project FISH which provides tying materials for MFFC events, tying with a young student Saturday at Outdoorama. Right: MFFC members at the kid’s booth on opening day at Outdoorama.



# On A Roll *With Federal Funds, TU Tackles a Slew of Midwest Projects*

**By Nichol De Mol**  
**Trout Unlimited**

2023 was a good year for Great Lakes coldwater conservation, marked by an influx of federal funding for necessary infrastructure upgrades.

It's hard to believe that 2024 is here and I'm kicking off my 14th year at Trout Unlimited. When I was hired to manage the Rogue River Home Rivers Initiative in 2010, I was the first TU staffer in the Great Lakes. Ever. Today, we have a strong team of 12, and I've had the pleasure of managing them and seeing their growth over time, in numbers and in strength.

Even just a few years ago, I couldn't imagine the synergy with which we're working today. Every year, we're working more collaboratively and getting better at sharing ideas and resources, but 2023 took our team to new heights.

Because of transformational funding opportunities made possible by the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 and Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, we've been able to pursue basin-wide projects – opening us up to working on a much larger scale than we've ever been able to before. By not being limited by state and watershed boundaries, we are able to dream up bigger projects, and that's resulting in bigger outcomes on the ground.



*Left: Two perched, undersized culverts on Trout Creek blocking fish passage; Right: the new properly sized structure getting installed on Trout Creek*

To get a good perspective of just where we've been working, check out this map highlighting the areas where we're removing barriers, reconnecting rivers for the benefit of fish and people, and for the rivers themselves.

In 2023, we carried out our first road-stream crossing project in the Lake Superior basin on Wisconsin's Wilson Creek. Next year, we'll have reconnected the entire stream with two additional restoration projects.

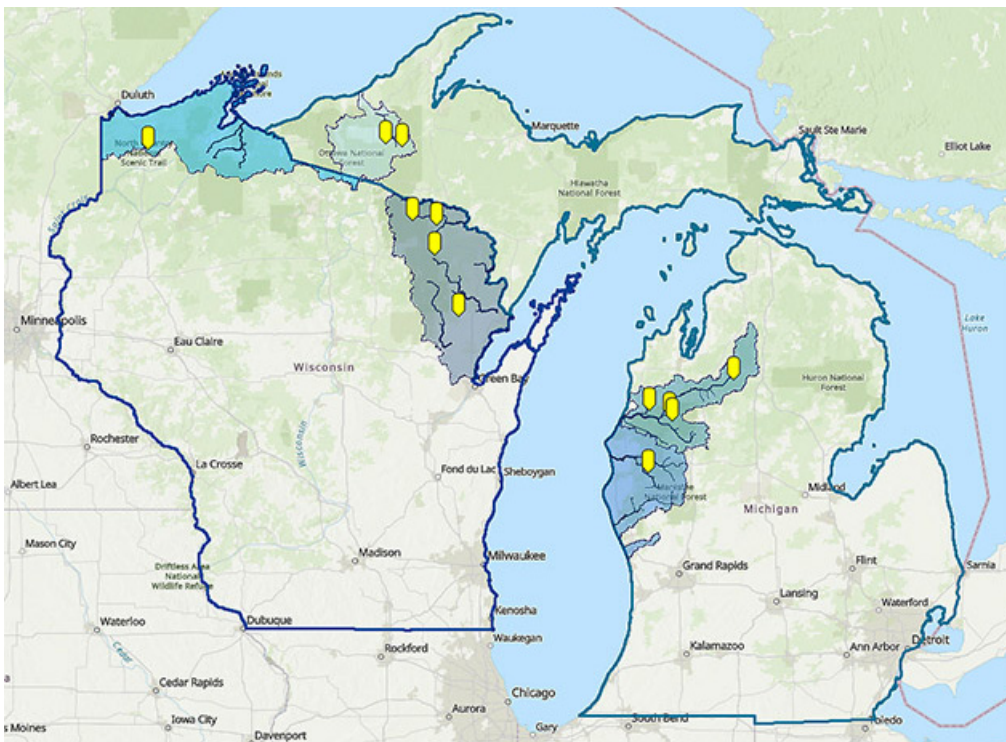
On Michigan's Hinton Creek, we replaced the 12th and final aquatic organism barrier identified in the system, completely reconnecting the mainstem of Hinton Creek with its fish-bearing tributaries.

The year also brought our first infrastructure projects getting implemented in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on Spargo and Trout Creek in the Ontonagon River watershed. And that's just to name a few highlights.

All this speaks much more to the successful partnerships that we've built and the support we've gotten by bringing more people into these efforts. Let's be clear; this could not happen alone.

In total last year, we replaced and improved 12 road stream crossings resulting in reconnecting 40 miles of rivers and streams, where we also implemented restoration projects using natural approaches.

With so much more planned in the coming years, I already know this is a turning point that will shape our Great Lakes restoration for the better.



*To view the interactive map on the left of Great Lakes infrastructure projects from 2023 scan the adjacent QR code.*



# Daring Rescue saves ice fisherman from Lake Gogebic

**By the Michigan DNR**

Sixty-three-year-old Paul Boehm of Ontonagon is lucky to be alive today after falling repeatedly through the weakening ice of Lake Gogebic on March 13 when temperatures had reached the low 50s by the afternoon.

At about 4:30 p.m. CDT, DNR Conservation Officers Jennifer Hanson and Zach Painter were notified by Negaunee Regional Dispatch that a man had gone through the ice near Merriweather in Bergland Township.

At 13,380 acres, Lake Gogebic is the Upper Peninsula's largest inland lake, spreading across portions of Ontonagon and Gogebic counties. A lakefront homeowner, Sue Barrett, called emergency dispatch after hearing Boehm yelling and seeing him crawling on the ice.

"She said she saw him sprawled out on the ice and a few moments later, saw him break through, and observed only his head above water," Hanson said. "She tried to reach him by paddle board but was unsuccessful."

When Hanson arrived, Boehm was well over 100 yards offshore. CO Painter and Michigan State Police Trooper Paul Maxinoski waded through waters near shore and attempted to help Boehm by throwing him a line with an ice rescue bag, but he could not pull himself out of the ice.

Rescuers from the Bergland Volunteer Fire Department arrived and rowed a rowboat from shore up to the ice.

After the firefighters got out, Maxinoski pulled the boat over the ice to where Painter and Boehm were. They then secured Boehm in the boat.

Hanson and a Bergland firefighter waded out across the nearest section of water to the ice to help pull the boat to



*Rescuers work to reach Paul Boehm of Ontonagon who fell through the ice of Lake Gogebic on March 13.*

shore as Maxinoski worked to break ice with a paddle.

Boehm was taken to Aspirus Ironwood Hospital in Ironwood and was released that night.

"While he was exiting the ice yesterday, he first fell through about 100 yards from his ice shanty. He had fallen through a few more times but was able to kick himself out of the water and self-rescue," Hanson said. "He crawled on his belly for quite some ways, but when he fell through again, he was so cold, wet and exhausted he could not get out."

Later a friend was able to retrieve belongings Boehm left on the ice, including his ice shack, cellphone and wallet.



Michigan Fly Fishing Club  
P.O. Box 530861  
Livonia, MI 48153