The Evening Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

September 2026 Edition

Message from the President

By Todd A. Schotts

Welcome back to all my fellow club members for the 2026 – 2027 year. Before I get going too far, I want to give a big thank you to everyone for letting me take the reins as President for my 2nd term. This is such a great honor knowing that you have elected me as your President and I am so honored to be able to give back to this club for all it has given me throughout the many moons that I have been in the club. From volunteering at our schools, to running 2 outings, writing articles, being chairperson for the show, and serving on the board. Thank you from the bottom of my heart; it means a lot that you are letting me give back to this club and you as my fellow members.

This year is kicking off with a bang, as we have added another outing to our clubs' outings with the "Fall Streamer Classic" in October at the historic Wa Wa Sum, thank you to Erik Seymour for stepping up to chair an outing for the club. This is one thing this club is always known for, our volunteerism. This is such a great thing for our club and all of its members.

I want to thank this past year's board members as they were such a great working team and we had obstacles we had to take care; which we did in such quick and prompt procedures.

This coming year, some of last years board members are now taking other positions and we have 3 new members added to our board. Welcome and this year will be just as great if not better.

This past summer for our Non-Meeting Wednesdays on the Water Summer Tour 2026 was a success once again for another year. A huge thank you to Ken Harfoot for Co-Chairing this with me. It was always great with the different locations, we always saw different club members, along with the club members that always followed us. We had a lot of obstacles to deal with, lots of rain, stormy weather, high heat, winds, and road construction that closed down our access to one location. I got to see Kayaks with portable battery fans, ice bag under a seat, and umbrellas to stay cool. Very innovative and resourceful by our fellow club members. I want to give a huge thank you to all the members that have attended our locations this past summer and next year hopefully Mother Nature will not toss out so many different challenges.

To wrap up, I want to say thank you to everyone once again for allowing me be the President of our wonderful club, it is really such an honor. Tight lines Todd.

Upcoming Club Events

2026

09/16 Activity — Bill Magee
09/19 Pointe Mouille Festival (19–20)
09/20 Wisconsin Driftless (20–24)
09/26 Muskegon River Speyfest
10/07 Speaker — Tommy Lynch
10/14 Board meeting
10/21 Activity — tyer TBD
10/22 Fall Streamer Classic (22–25)
11/04 Speaker — TBD
11/11 Board meeting
11/18 Activity — tyer TBD
12/02 Speaker — Kelly Neuman
12/09 Board meeting
12/16 Activity & garage sale

2027

01/06 Speaker — TBD
01/20 Activity — tyer TBD
02/03 Speaker — Ed McCoy
02/17 Activity — tyer TBD
03/03 Activity — tyer TBD
03/17 Club meeting — program TBD
04/03 Trout Tune Up
04/07 Club meeting — program TBD
04/21 Club meeting — program TBD
04/24 Trout Opening Day & Remembrance
05/05 Club meeting — program TBD

Meeting dates extend through May; programs marked TBD will follow.

Latest details: mffc.org

May Board Meeting Highlights

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

The board approved the agenda and April 8 minutes. President Todd Schotts thanked the board members for serving and welcomed new members. Treasurer Jim Aitken reported that the club was under budget at the start of May; final Expo results were still coming in. John Eriksson planned to follow up on outstanding renewals where possible after some member emails bounced.

After a storage rent increase, Aitken said the club should seek a better-located space of about 20 by 20 feet. To support Zoom access at meetings, the board approved purchasing a web-capable camera; Aitken was assigned the purchase.

John Hunter raised meeting health and safety needs. Members noted an AED at Clarenceville Middle School and AEDs and first aid kits at Multi Lakes. The board approved making an AED and first aid kit available at meetings, buying two first aid kits, and reimbursing Hunter for a kit he would buy. Hunter agreed to give a first aid and safety presentation at a fall speaker meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Edited highlights from MFFC Board of Directors minutes, May 13, 2026; submitted by John Aukee, Recording Secretary.

Club Officers and Directors

President — Todd Schotts
president@mffc.org

Vice President — Vern White
vicepresident@mffc.org

Treasurer — John Eriksson
treasurer@mffc.org

Membership — Scott Terzich
membership@mffc.org

Recording Secretary — Nancy Klimko
recordingsecretary@mffc.org

Corresponding Secretary — Jon Bada
correspondence@mffc.org

Director At-Large — Norm Tabaka
ntabaka@gmail.com

Director At-Large — Bill Yaw
byaw96@gmail.com

Director At-Large — Terry DeFauw
tdefauw59@aol.com

Web Mistress — Sybil Hunter
admin@mffc.org

Past President — Kevin Lipp
kjlipp@gmail.com

THE EVENING HATCH

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Editor: James Harris — jharris@runlinerodco.com
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Members are invited to contribute. Four hundred words and two or three photographs make a page. If writing is not your thing, call the editor and he will write it up for your approval.

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Bourbons & Browns 2026

Grayling, Michigan • By Tom Coleman

The 2026 Bourbons & Browns fly fishing outing at Wa Wa Sum Lodge in Grayling was another good one.

The weather was about as good as we could have asked for. The only issue was the Canadian wildfire smoke hanging in the air, which kept a few people from making the trip. We also had a few no-shows and a couple of last-minute cancellations. That left us with a smaller group than expected, but sometimes that's not a bad thing. Things were so much easier. Plenty of time to fish, talk, eat, relax and enjoy the bourbon.

We also spent some time off the water. Glenn Eberly and George arranged access to the Lovells Fly Fishing Museum, which offered a great look at the history and traditions of fly fishing in the area and was well worth the stop.

Jacob also gave us a tour of the Grayling Fish Hatchery. It was interesting to see the operation up close and learn more about the work supporting the fisheries we enjoy.

There's also a new book out, "The New Au Sable", written by Dave Jankowski and Thomas Buhr. It covers the story of Fred Bear along with the history of the lodges up and down our favorite river. Kevin Gardner was one of the contributors to the book and spoke about Wa Wa Sum and its place in that history. We even had a curious neighbor Hank stop by after reading the chapter on WaWa Sum just to look around. I invited him inside to give him a quick tour and invited him to dinner the following night to hear Kevin's talk. He was full of questions and excitement—like he was meeting the Pope for the first time. Glen, from the museum, joined us for dinner as well.

Jeff McGowan also stopped by for dinner at Gates Lodge (I'll explain in the next paragraph) and returned the following evening with his lovely wife and dog for a brief visit.

Friday's planned meal was canceled due to the smoke-related disruption and a last second cancellation, so we pivoted and went to Gates Lodge instead. Fortunately for us, Gates had their share of cancellations due to the smoke as well. It turned out to be a great decision—good food, good company, and plenty of stories from the river.

It wasn't the biggest Bourbons & Browns outing we've had, but it was one of the best. Maybe due to the smaller group. Less coordination, more fishing, and more time to relax.

The smoke may have kept a few people away, but it didn't keep us from having a successful trip.

Good fishing. Good friends, ... and yes, Good Bourbon.



A visit to the Grayling Fish Hatchery with Jacob, our host. Photo supplied by Tom Coleman.



Dinner in the dining hall at Wa Wa Sum. Photo supplied by Tom Coleman.

Fly of the Month • 4

Hud's Bushwhacker

By Todd A. Schotts

YESSSSS, Fly of the Month is back! After a long time off from writing this column for our newsletter, we have decided to bring it back. To kick off the return, I chose a pattern that has brought me so many tight lines.

This month's fly is Hud's Bushwhacker, from Umpqua Feather Merchants Signature Fly Tyer Brian Hudspeth. It is a very effective streamer tied on a different style of hook. The pattern first appeared around 2015, with inspiration from the Sheep Series of Minnow patterns.

Brian noticed extra-wide-gap worm hooks while working on the gear side of a shop and thought they would suit his streamer idea. Besides the wide gap, the longer area behind the eye makes it easier to tie in the materials that form the head. A shorter area behind the eye can work, too; it just takes a little more time.

After trying synthetics alone, he found that adding bucktail to the body and wing helped keep the fly weedless: the body materials act as a weed guard. Cured epoxy on the head also helps the fly bump beneath weeds as you strip it.

Brian initially wrapped lead along the bottom of the hook. But sometimes you want the fly just below the surface instead of deep. Adding split shot to the keel—the large curve at the bottom of the hook—lets you adjust the weight on the water. You can carry the same fly and add or leave off weight as conditions call for.

Tie it to imitate the baitfish in your water for largemouth and smallmouth bass, pike and big browns. Brian's favorite colors are chartreuse and white. Fish it near heavy cover, docks, submerged brush, rock piles or weeds, using short, erratic strips.

I use these flies all the time for smallmouth and largemouth bass in lakes and rivers. I hope you tie some up and give them a try. Until next month, tight lines and snazzy flies! Todd.

Tying Materials

Hook: VMC XL, sizes 2/0, 1/0 or 1.

Thread: heavy-duty, 140 or 210 denier, matching the body.

Body/wing: bucktail, SF Flash Blend, Slinky Fiber, Craft Fur or another synthetic.

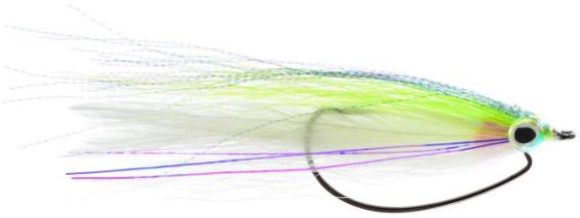
Eyes: 3D molded stick-on eyes, secured with resin.

Optional weight: lead wire on the keel, or split shot added while fishing.

Colors: chartreuse/white, bluegill, red/white, sunfish and shad.



Hud's Bushwhacker tied and photographed by Todd Schotts.



Another color variation photographed by Todd Schotts.

A Transmissible Cancer Found in Fish

Research summary • July 2026

Researchers have identified a naturally transmissible cancer in brown bullhead catfish from Lake Memphremagog, on the Vermont–Quebec border. The study, published in Nature on July 22, examined melanoma tumors and normal tissue using whole-genome sequencing.

The tumor genomes were more closely related to one another than to the fish carrying them. Shared genetic changes supported the conclusion that the cancer cells had passed between fish, rather than each tumor arising independently in its host.

The finding adds fish to the small group of animals in which naturally transmissible cancers have been documented. Other examples occur in dogs, Tasmanian devils and bivalves.

How the cells move between fish, where the cancer originated and what it means for the wider fish population remain unresolved. The study concerns brown bullheads at this particular lake; it does not establish a comparable problem in Michigan waters.

Source credit: Emily E. Curd and colleagues, Nature, July 22, 2026. "Brown bullhead catfish melanoma represents a novel transmissible cancer."

doi.org/10.1038/s41586-026-10828-6

Michigan's Next Forest Starts Small

Reporting summary • July 2026

Long-term seedling observations in Michigan show how warming, deer browsing and other pressures can shape the forest that grows next. Bridge Michigan reported on July 30 on work by Michigan State University researchers Richard Kobe and Bailey McNichol, drawing on nearly three decades of observations in 12 Manistee National Forest plots.

Warmer conditions benefited some species, including red maple, black cherry and red and white oak, while limiting others such as sugar maple and American beech. Those responses alone do not determine which trees reach the canopy. Deer browsing and shade can keep young oaks from growing even where temperatures otherwise favor them.

That makes the seedling stage important: a forest's future depends on which small trees survive and grow, not simply which species are present today. The researchers emphasize the combined effects of climate, disease, pests and competition.

Forests support wildlife, water quality and recreation. Following young trees over many years helps reveal changes that may be difficult to see by looking only at mature trees.

Source credit: Isabella Figueroa Nogueira, Bridge Michigan, July 30, 2026, "Seedling data shows Michigan forests under pressure from climate change, deer, disease."

Read the full article at Bridge Michigan.

Fall Streamer Classic

October 22–25, 2026 • Wa Wa Sum Lodge • Grayling

Spend four days and three nights on the Au Sable's Holy Water for autumn streamer fishing. Erik Seymour is chairing this new club outing, with Wa Wa Sum Lodge as the home base.

$250 per person • A $50 deposit reserves your spot

Continental breakfast and three dinners are included; the dinner menu is to be announced. Lunch is on your own. Bring a 7- or 8-weight outfit, sinking heads and streamers.

Contact Erik Seymour to reserve or ask about the outing.
586-596-5988 • eriksey@yahoo.com



Rob and Erik scouting a "Top Secret Location" during Bourbons & Browns. Photo supplied by Tom Coleman.

The Lure of Truth

By James Harris

"If you want to get to know someone, go fish with them for a couple of days."

That saying gets at something I value about fishing. A dinner together gives us time to exchange stories. A few days on the water give us time to see how those stories line up with the person telling them. Eventually, the introductions are over, the easy conversation runs out, and we settle into being ourselves.

Fishing gives that process plenty of help. There are biting insects, tangled leaders, unexpected rain and long stretches when the fish seem to have other plans. Sooner or later, something goes wrong. A companion's response can tell you more than a successful morning ever would. An encouraging word, a little humor or a patient hand with a knot can change the mood of the whole day.

Of course, the river is giving our companions the same opportunity to learn about us. It is easy to admire patience when someone else is doing the waiting. We have to practice it when our own fly is in a tree, our feet are cold or the person beside us has caught the only fish. A trip gives us a chance to notice what kind of company we bring along.

Then there is the quiet. On a longer trip, we do not have to fill every pause. We can watch the water, drink our coffee and let a thought take its time. Conversation becomes less hurried. We may learn what someone worries about or what they hope to do next. Sometimes we learn that we can sit together without saying much at all, and that is a comfortable discovery.

We also learn how people look after one another. Does someone lend a hand before being asked? Make room for a less experienced angler? Notice when a partner has had enough cold or needs a break? These ordinary gestures matter. When plans change or equipment fails, a dependable companion helps everyone find a way forward.

The memories that hold a trip together are often small ones: coffee in the morning fog, a shared laugh after a stubborn tangle, the quiet celebration of a good fish. Hours with little action become part of the story too. By the time we head home, we have shared enough of the day's work and waiting to know each other a little better.

That is part of what a fishing club offers. An outing makes room for friendships to grow beyond the meeting room. We start with a common interest and, given enough time together, discover the person behind the familiar name.

I like the promise in that old saying. Go fishing together for a couple of days. Pay attention to the person beside you as well as the water ahead. You may come home with a fish story. You may also come home with a friend.

Montana and Wa Wa Sum



Two bull elk near the Cascade Lake trail in Yellowstone National Park. Photo by Craig Summers.



Nancy Klimko and Kelly Summers hiking to Cascade Lake to fish for grayling and cutthroat trout. Photo by Craig Summers.



At the New Member's Outing on the Wa Wa Sum Lodge porch: Glenn Easterbrook, Bill Yaw, Mike Sinclair and Wally Kotlarczyk. Photo courtesy of Glenn Easterbrook.

On the South Branch



John Dingman fishing the South Branch during Bourbons & Browns. Photo supplied by Tom Coleman.

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

www.mffc.org