



The Evening

Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

July 2007

A St. Clair Slam? A Super Slam? Meszaros tells how

Do \$3-a-gallon gasoline prices have you down? Lake St. Clair Guide Brian Meszaros came to the club's first summer meeting at the Northville Community Center with tales and photos guaranteed to get you thinking about heading east rather than north.

"It's not a Great Lake, but it's a great lake," Meszaros said, explaining that Lake St. Clair is classified as a "connecting waterway," rather than one of the Great Lakes. That fact is important when it comes to government resources available for the body of water, but it hasn't seemed to hurt it one bit as a fishery. Lake St. Clair, he said, is recognized as "one of the top three smallmouth bass fisheries in the world, the number one musky fishery in the world and has been recognized by *American Angler* magazine as one of the top 100 fly fishing destinations in the world."

So just what is a "St. Clair Slam?" It means landing a small mouth bass, a carp and a musky. To claim a Super Slam, add a walleye to the mix. MFFC member Charles Gray reported a five-species day. Does that qualify as a "Super Duper Slam?" we wonder.

The hot fly, according to Meszaros is a "Perch Clouser." Yes, perch is one of the species that Meszaros targets for his clients, but perch also qualifies as the top "bait" for Lake St. Clair's predators. Other go-to flies include the Emerald Shiner and Gummy Minnow.

July speaker will help you beat the summer doldrums

When you think it's too hot to fish, July speaker Scott Bowerman (photo at right) will tell you differently. Scott guides on the Muskegon and White Rivers and is a professional fly tyer. His guide service, "Your Fly Guys," targets browns, rainbows, smallies, steelhead and salmon.

He has 30 years experience behind the vise and has developed several unique fly patterns, each carefully and precisely designed by him. He ties thousands of flies a year for personal use, clients, and non-profit organizations. Some of his patterns have made it into Umpqua's selection of flies.

For more information about Scott or his guide service, check out his website: www.yourflyguys.com.

If he looks familiar, he was one of our guest tyers at this year's Midwest Fly Fishing Expo. You may have also seen him at the FFF-Great Lakes Council Fly Tying Expo last December in Mason.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS



July 11

Speaker: Scott Bowerman
Topic: Fishing the Muskegon and White Rivers

Northville Community Center,
303 West Main, next to the
Northville Public Library.
7:30 p.m.

July 19-23

Couples/Family Outing
Wa Wa Sum Lodge, Grayling
Contact: Dale Ross

August 5

Annual Family Day / Pig & Corn
Roast, Multi-Lakes Conservation
Club, Contact: Jeff Parker

August 8

Speaker: Darryl & Kathy
Nowacki, Vintners Cellar Canton
Winery
Northville Comm. Ctr., 7:30 p.m.



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Remember, we're in summer meeting mode

The MFFC continues in "summer mode" this month and next. That means only one meeting each month. That meeting is on the second Wednesday of the month – July 11 and August 8. Summer meetings are held at the Northville Community Center, 303 West Main, next to the Northville Public Library, and begin at 7:30 p.m.

MFFC members in the news ...

A bevy of MFFC members made appearances in the Spring 2007 edition of *Michigan's Streamside Journal*:

Thousands of blue-and-gray-clad Civil War re-enactors have nothing on Jeff "Pieboy" McGowan and a "tradition of pre-Opening Day zaniness." Each year, a group of MFFC members have assembled to float a stretch of the Holy Water, which is now open to catch-and-release fishing year-round, on the Friday before Michigan's traditional last-Saturday in April Trout Opener. This year, the flotilla of a half dozen Au Sable boats conspired to recreate a 1950's era float. McGowan led the foray outfitted in vintage hip boots, red-and-black wool shirt, and an Earl Madsen-inspired pith helmet. Other club members captured in print or photos were John Bayerl, Al Bullock, Kal Latham, Past President Kevin Lipp, John Long and Mark Rais.

Mark Hendricks, president of the Mason-Griffith Founders Chapter of TU; and one-time MFFC officer Mark "Bear" Ratajczak, Mason-Griffith vice president, appeared in a photo along with some of the chapter's 2007 Founders Collection prizes.

A letter to the editor penned by Ray Geitka decried proposed mining activities in the Upper Peninsula and

the potential degradation of the Salmon Trout River. "Will there be no respite for the last of our coaster brook trout?" he asked.

News from the Great Lakes Council of the FFF

Colleen Jenkins, a member of Flygirls and the MFFC, has joined the Board of Directors of the Great Lakes Council (GLC) of the Federation of Fly Fishers.

Former MFFC President Mike Matuszewski received the FFF-GLC President's Award at the organization's annual Conclave last month. "His volunteer work at Great Lakes Council events over the past years and his service as Vice President of Membership have been major contributions to the success of the GLC. Mike's support of the goals of the Federation of Fly Fishers reflects great dedication and is truly appreciated by members of the GLC," said GLC President Jim Schramm in presenting the award.

Other award recipients included: the Anglers of the Au Sable, GLC Conservation Award; fly tyer Jim Reed, Contributing Artisans Achievement Award; Mark Johnson, GLC Temple Fork Outfitters Achievement Award; Three Rivers Fly Fishers of South Bend, IN, GLC Club Achievement Award; and John (Jack) Breslin, GLC Educator of the Year.



Introducing kids to fly fishing

Club Treasurer Bill Shannon joined Vice President Pat Brazzil and long-time club member and former board member Fred Field at the Wayne County Parks' annual Fishing Derby last May, helping to get kids more interested in fishing, especially fly fishing. The event was held in Hines Park at Waterford Bend in Northville, where a section of the Rouge River was closed and stocked with rainbow trout. The event was open to children age 12 and under.

It's back! Smallmouth outing returns and the fish off Eagle Point quake

by Todd A. Schotts

Greater Port Austin played host to the return of the famed MFFC Smallmouth Outing. With no outing last year, I wanted to make this one extra special.

With the weather reports calling for lots of warmth, humidity and a 40% chance of rain all three days, I was praying to the fishing gods, that the reports would be wrong. Home base for this outing was the Sun and Sand Motel. On June 1, Corrine and I were joined by Leon Barnett, Marlin Turbett, Steve Gudich, Larry Richer, Jim Doig, Bruce Strachan, and John Long.

The weather conditions were excellent for our first day out there. The praying must have helped. It was partly sunny with an occasional sprinkle as we made our way to Eagle Bay. As we left the Sun and Sand, it was good that we didn't have flags on the vehicles; we might have been mistaken for a fly fishing parade.

Arriving at the lake, I noticed the water was down from previous years up there fishing. We also couldn't help but notice two other anglers (practitioners of the dark art of spin fishing) returning to their vehicle with two stringers full of **HUGE** smallmouth. Salivating over the sight of these lunkers, we began gearing up with a greater sense of purpose. After a force march of about 400 yards out into the lake, we began the assault.

With my second cast, BAM, I had a smallie on the line. The size of this flats swimmer was about 14 inches. I ended up landing two more that afternoon a tad smaller. But I did get lots of practice with the long-distance release (LDR). Steve Gudich experienced a dismaying case of the "first-cast blues." He landed a bronzeback on the first cast and, well,



Cozzy Wong (right) displays his 19-inch smallmouth as Dad Barny records the moment.

that would be it for him that day. Others were getting on the board, as well, as everyone seemed to be landing these flats beauties. We fished the flats for about four or five hours. If my memory is correct, Bruce Strachan would get the title for most fish. The fly of the day was a chartreuse and white Clouser Deep Minnow. I even had good luck with my own minnow design Schotties CT Minnow.

Our ranks grew for day #2. We were joined by Carl Clark, Brent Marchant, Barny and Cozzy Wong. The weather again was really awesome -- partly cloudy and an east wind pushing more water into the bay.

Cozzy took the honors for the first fish of the day. Once the fish was landed, we just had to measure it. He taped out at a whopping 19 inches. Good job, Cozzy! Let me tell you, Cozzy and Barny are pure fishermen. When we couldn't get the fish interested in our flies, we would call over Cozzy and he would prime the piscatorial pump. Cozzy is all of 13 years old, a pure fish magnet and may be the next big fly fishing guru. Heading back from Eagle Point, we met up with Brent and I gave him some instructions on the flats and also a Clouser Minnow (chartreuse and white). About 10 minutes later, after casting in and around the rocks and wood, Brent landed his first flats bronzeback.

You can't have a Michigan Fly Fishing Club outing without awesome food. Hopefully, Corrine and I kept up that

standard. The chow for Friday consisted of chili, chips, date bread (*homemade, thanks Larry*) and beverages. Saturday afternoon's repast included pulled pork and pulled chicken BBQ sandwiches (*with my secret BBQ sauce*), coleslaw, a veggie tray, cookies and a pineapple fluff (*thanks to Steve*).

At about 6 p.m. we headed back out to Eagle Bay. As we were heading out in the bay, we met up with Barny, Cozzy, Brent, Steve and Marlin. We made our way to the far part of the bay. Once we got on the wood and rock debris, we got into the fish. LDRs were the rule of the evening for me and Carl. Barny and Cozzy picked up right where they left off. They were slamming the smallies one after another. Brent was back on the fish as were Leon and Marlin.

There's where the resurrected MFFC Smallmouth Outing concludes ... with fish on the line. I had a wonderful time and I hope everyone else did. So, hopefully, next year it will be bigger and better. I already have tips on new locations to try for next year. I plan on giving them a test run this summer. And if you go up to Port Austin in need of lodging, check out the Sun and Sand Motel. They have excellent accommodations and very reasonable rates.

So until next time, thank you to all who attended the outing and tight lines!

Court stops proposal to dump treated water into Kolke Creek

A Michigan trial judge issued a 32-page opinion and order at the end of May, blocking an attempt by an oil company and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to use Kolke Creek as a drainage way for the discharge of 1.15 million gallons per day of treated waste water. Kolke Creek forms the headwaters of Michigan's famed AuSable River and the proposed discharge was to come from a large contaminated groundwater plume from Michigan's oil patch located in the Manistee River watershed.

Otsego County Circuit Judge Dennis Murphy ruled, "Given the delicate ecosystem of Kolke Creek, this court finds that it is not a suitable location to discharge large volumes of treated groundwater.... This is especially true in light of the fact that Merit has other feasible and prudent alternatives to discharging the treated waste water." Judge Murphy heard testimony for 13 days from late February through mid-April before reaching his decision. He noted that the Plaintiffs' expert testimony and arguments outweighed the less reliable company and DEQ testimony, which led to his decision that the discharge was unreasonable under water law and would impair the water, creek, wetlands, and aquatic habitat in violation of Michigan's Environmental Protection Act.

The Court found that the discharge would cause flooding, erosion, sedimentation, and turbidity, and that it would increase phosphorous and chlorides in a pristine aquatic environment. On the other hand, the Court found there would be no immediate harm to Merit or other landowners near the plume while the company and DEQ implement one of several possible methods to treat and discharge the waste water at the site. The Court also found particularly persuasive the fact that the treated



Rusty Gates, president of the Anglers of the AuSable, led the effort to challenge the plan to introduce more than 1 million gallons of treated water into Kolke Creek.

water would be transported from a foreign watershed (the Manistee River) into the AuSable River watershed. "This massive water transfer will have a substantial effect on both the watershed receiving the water, and the watershed being depleted of water," he stated, then observed, "Even without considering the large volumes at issue, the fact that water is being carried from one watershed to another is a significant factor."

At the conclusion of his opinion, Judge Murphy issued an order stopping the company and DEQ from discharging any treated waste water unless Merit could acquire riparian rights from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) which owns the land where any discharge would enter Kolke Creek. Previously, DNR biologists and officials frowned on the project, saying it would harm the creek and fishery and violate a long-standing policy against allowing water to be diverted from one watershed to another. Even if the DNR were to depart from its policy and earlier considerations, the Judge concluded that, "Assuming that Merit were to gain riparian rights, its use of the watercourse must be reasonable." Based on his findings, he concluded that Merit's and DEQ's "proposed use of Kolke Creek would not be." The

Judge's order gives Merit 30 days to try and obtain riparian rights and, if it does obtain them, to work out some lower level of discharge with the Plaintiffs. If that cannot be worked out, the court will hold a limited hearing on whether a proposed level of discharge, if any, can be done without violating water law.

"This decision is a vindication of the Anglers, Mayers, Forciers, and many, many citizens, including our members, of what they told the Department and Merit Energy when this whole thing finally became public," said Rusty Gates, Anglers' President. "We stand and will continue to protect every flowing inch of the AuSable from misguided policy and projects like this, and hope this ends here."

"My clients and citizens were stonewalled by a facade of arguments and statements that there would be no harm, or there were no alternatives to discharge the waste other than to Kolke Creek," said Jim Olson, attorney for the Anglers from the Traverse City law firm of Olson, Bzdok & Howard. "The Court's opinion dismantled their facade stone by stone. The Court has set a sterling precedent for the AuSable and other streams, lakes, and watersheds in Michigan."

"My clients are thrilled with the decision, but we also want it to stop here," said Susan Hlywa Topp, Gaylord attorney for Janney Mayer Simpson and her family, and the Forcier family, who live on Lynn Lake a short distance downstream from the proposed discharge. "They, like others who have fought this case, have had to expend hundreds of thousands of dollars to right this injustice to Kolke Creek and Lynn Lake, when Merit and the State could and should have put an end to this debacle a long time ago."

"If Merit approaches the DNR to obtain an unprecedented conveyance of riparian rights from the State of Michigan, the Anglers of the AuSable will be there to intervene and stop this from going any further," Gates said.

Modified license fees increase proposals are before the Legislature

Legislation has been introduced in the Michigan Legislature that would incrementally increase fees for hunting and fishing licenses in Michigan over the next six years.

The proposed increases for hunting contained in House Bill 4624 begin in 2007 and would be phased in gradually over four years until 2010, and the proposed increases for fishing contained in Senate Bill 406 begin in 2008 and would be phased in gradually over four years until 2011. The legislation also authorizes a 5 percent inflationary increase in license fees for 2012 and 2013.

This new plan replaces an earlier fee increase proposal that was widely opposed and subsequently withdrawn.

In both bills, the current 60 percent discount that hunters and anglers age 65 and older receive remains at that rate until 2010, when the amount of the discount is reduced by 5 percent each year until 2013, at which time the senior license discount will have been reduced to 40 percent of the corresponding resident license.

The current license fee structure was signed into law in 1996, at a time when the Department of Natural Resources was provided more General Fund support in the state budget. Today, the DNR receives just 9 percent of its budget from the General Fund. Three quarters of the DNR's budget consist of "restricted funds," which are limited by law as to how they can be spent.

"As General Fund support for the department has been reduced over the last several years, we have been forced to look at license fee increases so that we can continue the work we do to provide high quality hunting and fishing experiences that hunters and anglers have come to expect in Michigan," said DNR Director

Rebecca Humphries. "These increases will allow the DNR to maintain its current level of service."

Revenues raised from license fee sales goes to the Game and Fish Protection Fund, a restricted fund that is used for the DNR's wildlife and fish conservation work in the state. The fund pays for conservation officers, wildlife and fish habitat projects and field biologists, among other expenditures.

According to the department, without a license fee increase, the DNR will face an \$8 million projected shortfall in the Game and Fish Protection Fund in 2008. The deficit increases to more than \$40 million by 2010, which would result in significant cuts in staff and programs for the department.

Other significant provisions of the legislation include:

- The age at which an angler would be required to have a fishing license drops from age 17 to 16;
- A deer combination license will be offered that allows the holder to take two deer in compliance with that year's rules. The price of the combination license in the first year of the license package is the sum of the price of a resident firearm deer license plus the cost of a second resident bow and arrow license;
- A new 72-hour or 3-day all-species fishing license will be offered to residents and nonresidents. This will allow infrequent or visiting anglers to fish over a three-day period, such as a holiday weekend, without purchasing multiple licenses at a cost below what three, 1-day licenses would cost and below the cost of an annual all-species license. All-species licenses allow anglers

to fish for all species, including salmon and trout;

- Youth anglers would be required to have a youth fishing license if they plan on keeping the fish that they catch. However, if accompanied by one or more licensed adult anglers, an unlicensed youth can keep the fish they catch as part of the limit of one or more of the adult anglers they are with;
- Nonresident license increases will take full effect the first year of the license package and will not be phased in like the Michigan resident licenses.

Hunters and anglers who already purchased a 2007 license will not be made to retroactively pay for an increase, should the legislation be approved and signed into law by the Governor.

See the DNR web site -- www.michigan.gov/dnr -- for more information.

FFF-GLC takes a position supporting the license package

The Federation of Fly Fishers – Great Lakes Council has taken a position supporting the modified license increases and has urged its members to contact their legislators to urge them to support the bills when they come up for a vote later this year.

Unsure about who represents you in the State House? Check out the House of Representatives on the Web at:

http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp.

If you do not know who represents you in the State Senate, check out that body's web site at <http://senate.michigan.gov/>.



Picnic organizers promise plenty of food and fun for the club's annual Family Day Picnic.

Mark your calendar for Aug. 5 Family Day Picnic, Pig & Corn Roast

The 4th annual Family Day Picnic is expected to be bigger and better than ever this year so make sure to mark Sunday, August 5, on your calendar and cancel your vacation plans so that you won't miss out. Picnic organizer Parker and fellow chefs will be

roasting a 160-pound pig and dozens of ears of corn. There will be plenty of beverages (of the non-alcoholic type) and more food than you can imagine as well as lots of activities for the kids.

The event returns to the Multi-Lakes Conservation Club at 3860 Newton Road in Commerce Township.

This is the best part! It's **free** to members' families. "All that we ask," Parker said, "is that you bring your favorite dish to pass, your own adult beverages, your fishing gear (if you like) and your smiling faces." There is good fishing off the dock or float tubes.

By the way, this is a shooting club, so if you're into skeet or sporting clays the facility will be open to one or all of those activities as well. Call Multi-Lakes at 248-363-9109 to inquire about any shooting fees and to see what is open to the public that weekend.

"I hope to see everyone; this is a great way to spend a day. Remember this is a Family Day picnic; please bring your children and grandchildren along to join in the fun," Parker said. The official festivities begin at 1 p.m.



An able-bodied crew again will be on-hand to mind the coals over which will be roasting 160 pounds of pig and hundreds of ears of corn.

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