



The Evening

Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB

September 2009



Torrential rains may have washed out a day or two of fishing, but others faced greater issues.

Catskill journal: The one that got (washed) away

by Mike Matuszewski

When our nephew invited Jan and me to come to Cooperstown, NY, at the end of July to cheer on him and his North Carroll (Md.) Thunder teammates in a week-long baseball tournament at Cooperstown Dreams Park, we immediately said we'd be there.

Not only are we huge baseball fans, but Cooperstown was only a couple of double-hauls from the famed waters of the Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creek. Besides that, the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum and the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame were located midway between the Catskill hamlets of Roscoe and Livingston Manor.



Willowemoc Creek, usually ankle- and shin deep, turned high and angry following late July's rains.

We should have known something was up when the Cooperstown locals kept marveling at the weather we were enjoying that week. Like Michigan, greater Cooperstown was experiencing a cooler-than-normal summer. It also was getting LOTS of rain. Weather for the tournament was great – lots of sun and warm temperatures, interrupted only by a stray shower. That changed within an hour of our nephew's team being eliminated, though. Clouds closed in and rain fell and fell and fell.

We weren't discouraged. The Beaverkill beckoned. It would be our first trip to the waters plied by the likes of Theodore Gordon, Art Flick and Lee and Joan Wulff. Plus, we'd be dressed from head to wader boot in Gore-tex, don't you know.

Continued on page 3

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS



The folks behind LSSU's fishcam will pay a visit to the club's first meeting for the 2009-10 program year.

September 16

NOTE: 3rd Wednesday

Speakers: Roger Greil, Dr. Ashley Moerke and Dr. Geoff Steinhart, Lake Superior State University Aquatics Lab

Topic: Behind the FishCam
Clarenceville Middle School
7:30 p.m.

September 23

MFFC Board Meeting
Clarenceville Middle School
7:30 p.m.

September 30

**NOTE: 5th Wednesday
Activity Meeting**
Featured Tier: Bruce Strachan
Clarenceville Middle School
7:30 p.m.



Published monthly

Editor Mike Matuszewski
editor@mffc.org
248-646-4768

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

2009 – 2010 Officers

President Pat Brazzil
president@mffc.org
248-344-7470

Vice President
Chris Hunter
vp@mffc.org
734-207-0575

Corresponding Secretary
Bruce Kramer
248-672-9056

Recording Secretary
Rick Gokenbach
313-343-0026

Treasurer Scott Freeburg
treasurer@mffc.org
248-366-6783

Membership Jim Telinda
membership@mffc.org
248-426-8926

Immediate Past President
Joe Sprys
248-380-6170

Board of Directors

Al Bullock 989-344-0594
Open position
Todd Schotts 313-348-9101

Membership renewal reminder

All current club members should have received a membership renewal form for the 2009-2010 program year. Dues remain \$35 per year and provide entrée to the best fly fishing club on the planet and a host of speakers, activities and opportunities to polish your skills and share your tales of fish pursued, caught and missed.

The hare truth: The Rabbit's worth a run

by Todd A. Schotts

A trout stream in southern Michigan? Yes, there are a few. The subject of this river report is a tributary of the Kalamazoo River in Allegan County and offers both warm water and coldwater fisheries.

The Rabbit River's watershed covers roughly 187,200 acres and drains most of north-central and northeast Allegan County, as well as small portions of Barry, Kent, and Ottawa counties. The Rabbit begins in the mucky wetlands surrounding Aubil Lake and flows generally west, traversing the northern portion of Wayland Township and Manlius Township where it joins the Kalamazoo River near Richmond.

Native American habitation, including the Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Pottawatomi, is estimated to have begun up to 7,000 years ago, shortly after the last ice sheets retreated from this area. As with many 19th century Michigan rivers when lumber was king, logging camps dotted the watershed. After the lumber boom ended, families began to clear land for farming, making agriculture the way of life in Allegan County. Today 60 percent of the watershed is devoted to agriculture, which today poses its own set of significant issues surrounding drainage, irrigation and runoff.

There's an abundance of fishing opportunities throughout the Rabbit River Watershed. The upper Rabbit has been actively managed for trout since at least 1939, as Brown Trout yearlings have been planted annually. Steelhead stockings in the lower Rabbit River began in the mid-1970s and continue today. Steelies are able to traverse a small dam in Hamilton to access spawning habitat in the designated trout stream area.

Don't forget, besides browns and steelies, there are also rainbows, brookies, and you might even land a "Tiger Trout" (*brown/brookie hybrid*). The upper Rabbit River has historically been popular with trout

anglers, primarily upstream of Wayland. This is small, tight water, but large wild and planted brown trout are possible. For your best bet, use the bridges to provide your access to areas in the upper Rabbit, due to lack of public accesses. The designated trout streams of this watershed include the entire main stem of the Rabbit River from its mouth at the Kalamazoo River to its source in Wayland Township. Tributaries upstream from U.S. 131 also flagged as Designated Trout Waters are parts of Miller Creek in Watson and Martin Townships, the west branch of Pigeon Creek, Silver Creek, and Miller Creek in Monterey Township.

Warmwater species -- smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, northern pike, walleye and various panfish -- are the quarry in the lower reaches of the watershed around Kalamazoo River. One inhabitant that you will want to be cautious about would be none other than the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, Michigan's only indigenous poisonous snake. It enjoys living in the wetlands, fens, and wet prairies in this watershed particularly hospitable.

In the lower reaches of the watershed, the Allegan State Game Area provides a plethora of public land recreation opportunities. Public lands are fewer in the upper Rabbit River Watershed, but there are still some excellent possibilities, including Silver Creek County Park, Bysterveld County Park, Wayland Parks, Dorr Parks, and Hopkins Village Park.

So rather than heading Up North, you might want to make for the Rabbit to pitch a prince nymph to a big brown or do Holschlag's crayfish hop for a feisty smallmouth.

Whichever you decide to do, hopefully your lines will be tight and your reels screaming. But remember, you will want to be cautious in your fishing pursuits as you don't want to encounter the Massasauga.

Until next time, careful hiking and tight lines and snazzy flies.



There'll be no fishing at on the Beaverkill author Mike Matuszewski concludes.

Catskill journal: The one that got (washed) away

Continued from front page

Concern began building as we travelled along and over road-side brooks swelled to raging torrents by the rains. The Delaware looked gray, high and angry as we drove over it.

Arriving at famed Junction Pool, where the Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creek come together, we were greeted by waves of rolling chocolate milk-colored water punctuated with whitecaps. This didn't look good, at least for fishing. Too bad, too. Size 14 sulfurs were popping from the chocolate-colored swirls as we peered across the river. According to the mythology of the Junction Pool a dithering trout developed two-heads because it tarried so long, trying to decide which body of water to follow. The legend of the two-headed trout is commemorated by a statue in Roscoe, which bills itself as Trout Town, USA.

Mary Dette, a member of one of the famed Roscoe Catskill-style flytying families, confirmed the assessment of our prospects for fishing any time soon. Barring any more rain, it would be another couple of days before the Beaverkill would be fishable. Unfortunately, by that time, we'd be back in Michigan. Fishing the Beaverkill would have to wait.

Undaunted, we decided to look farther upstream. We followed Willowemoc Creek upstream to the Catskill Fly

Fishing Center and Museum. There was no relief. Normally ankle-to-shin deep, it, too, was a mass of churning brown. Fishing this stream, too, would have to wait.

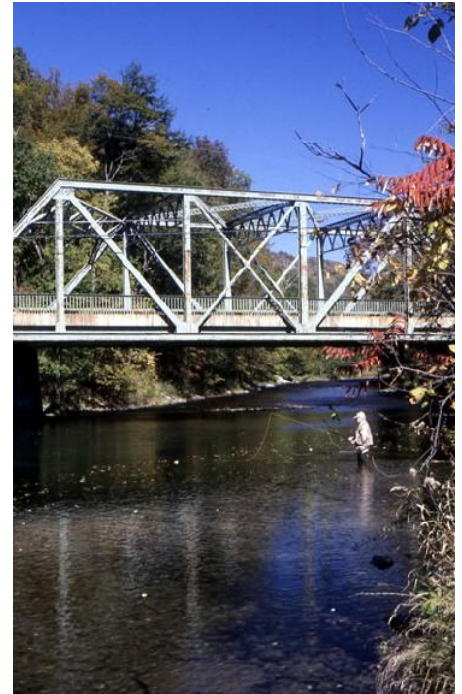
It did provide ample time to examine the exhibits, ranging from a display devoted to women and the fine art of Catskill fly angling, famous area fly tiers, a special display devoted to fly fishing in Japan, bamboo rods and rod-builders and the pioneering American fly fishers, as well as the plaques honoring the members of the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame.

Agnes Van Put, the museum's chief docent, showed us around. The spry 93-year-old mother of Fly Fishing Hall of Fame member Ed Van Put, she's been with the museum for 25 years and shows no sign of retiring. Agnes, it turns out, was a tier of some repute herself, as noted by a shadowbox containing some of her flies, including some patterns she learned from Lee Wulff.

Determined to return, we began the trek back to Michigan, but not before picking up a local paper carrying the news that Livingston Manor, only a few miles upstream of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, had flooded earlier in the week. "It flooded again yesterday," the store clerk said, matter of factly.



Agnes Van Put, a tier in her own right and mother of Fly Fishing Hall of Famer and Beaverkill author Ed Van Put, offers Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum visitors a warm welcome.



The Beaverkill and Willowemoc Creek normally flow low, clear and placid.



A Midwest Fly Fishing Exposition pin (the square pin in the upper left), made its way into a display devoted to internationally renowned tier Poul Jorgensen.



Speaking of renowned tiers, Mary Dette, is a font of knowledge on local conditions and fly patterns.



Sam Surre earned accolades in *The Detroit News*.

In the news, literally ... Surre stars in tale of Holy Water trouting

Well-known Grayling area guide and long-time MFFC friend Sam Surre was featured in an Aug. 6 *Detroit News* story authored by Lynn Henning.

It's the tale of a father-son half-day outing on the AuSable. Never mind that the Grayling-area expedition is initially described as a "consolation prize," after a planned fly-in to a lake 800 miles north of Winnipeg had to be cancelled because it had been so cold the lake was still iced over.

Describing Surre as a "fountain of knowledge," Henning wrote: "Surre knows the water and is expert on insect hatches. He ties his own flies, 1,000 dozen a year that he sells to northern Michigan shops. And he does a slick job of piloting an AuSable riverboat, a craft that 130 years ago hauled food and supplies into lumber camps before people saw they were ideal for navigating the AuSable's trout water."

Of the trip, he wrote: "We had been seeing more trout than we had been catching on a night so expressive of Michigan's summer magic that could have made one of those 'Pure Michigan' advertisements from it – with no need of ever making another. ... And if any father and son had a better few hours this summer, here's to you."

News from the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF)

GLC Tying Expo changes

venues: The annual Great Lakes Council Tying Expo is on the move. Held for the past several years at the Ingham County Fairgrounds in Mason, the 2009 edition of the event – the 10th Annual Tying Expo – will be held at Holt High School. So circle December 5 on your calendars. Hours for the event are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FFF newsletter goes electronic:

The Great Lakes Council's Board of Directors has voted to go entirely electronic. That means members will receive an email linking them to the latest electronic edition of *The Flyline* and discontinuance of a printed newsletter. *The Flyline*, by the way, is edited by MFFC member Colleen Jenkins.

FFF members will receive a one-time postcard in September. The purpose of the postcard is to remind members that the newsletter is going electronic while promoting the GLC's upcoming fall events.

One advantage to going entirely electronic is the fact that *The Flyline* will no longer be artificially constrained to eight- or 12-page formats.

FFF members who prefer getting a printed document via the U.S. Postal Service can request the service by mailing the GLC a check for \$8, for four issues. Requests should be mailed to Dave Fuller, 51315 Golfview Court, Granger, IN 46530-6502. The check should be made payable to "FFF-GLC Flyline."

FFF's Five Rivers Lodge fundraising raffle extended:

The FFF's Five Rivers Sweepstakes has been extended until the goal of selling 4,000 tickets has been reached. As of mid-August, 2,400 tickets have been purchased by members across the country.

The grand prize in the drawing is a five-day, four-night trip for two to the Five Rivers Lodge in Dillon, MT. Tickets can be purchased online at www.fffgear.com.

To reach the 4,000-ticket goal, FFF's national office is asking each FFF council and club to publicize the raffle. "During the next few weeks we urge you to contact every FFF club member in your area and encourage them to purchase at least one ticket. Each ticket represents a donation to the FFF and demonstrates support of the organization's mission of conserving, restoring, and educating through fly fishing. This sweepstakes is a chance to support the FFF and possibly the fly fishing trip of a lifetime," said FFF National Development Director Josset Gauley.

Progress reported on new trout regulations:

New trout regulations were implemented in 2000. At that time, the Fisheries Division of the DNR committed to evaluate the effects of these regulations on trout fisheries.

As a result of the analyses, the Fisheries Division proposes several changes to the existing trout stream regulations, including eliminating Type 2 regulations, modifying size limits for Type 1 streams, modifying splake size limits to match lake trout size limits, and combining the current Types 5-7 and some research waters into one category designated as Gear Restricted Waters.

An ad hoc Coldwater Regulations Committee has been meeting throughout the process. FFF-Great Lakes Council representative Terry Lyons reported that at a recent committee meeting "all parties agreed that Fisheries Division should present the gear restricted portion of the current proposal to the Natural Resources Commission for ratification and withhold the rest until we can resolve our differences." The Coldwater Regulations Committee continues to meet, with the next meeting scheduled for early September.

Call for volunteers:

Project Healing Waters needs your help

by Mike Duchin



The members of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club have big hearts, I know. I'm hoping to tap that selflessness. Specifically, I'm hoping that many of the talented fly tiers and fly casters who are members of the club will join me by volunteering for Project Healing Waters.

Project Healing Waters, conducted largely by members of the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) and Trout Unlimited (TU), serves military personnel who have been wounded, injured, or disabled to aid their physical and emotional recovery by introducing or rebuilding the skills of fly fishing and fly tying and by using and enjoying these skills on fishing outings and as lifelong recreation. While initially focusing on the military personnel in the Washington, D.C., area, the Project has expanded nationwide.

It's been found that fly tying and fly casting allow the vets to increase their motor and fine motor skills. In addition, the activities have a positive effect on healing the mind and spirit. The vets gain self worth and focus that has departed from their lives due to combat-related experiences and other physical and mental injuries by zeroing in on the art of tying flies and casting those bugs to catch fish.

I ask of you, my fellow fly fishers, to take two to three hours out of your life per month to assist me and others in instructing these veterans to tie flies and to cast them. The framework of the program and schedule are being developed in conjunction with occupational therapists at the John D. Dingell VA Hospital at 4646 John R Street in Detroit. The goal is to be in concert with the needs of the vets.

Right now it appears that a large pool of volunteers will optimize the program. While I'm happy to say I've got a group of initial volunteers lined up to get the program rolling, a large number of volunteers would make it possible to spread the project to more days if the demand is there. It would also reduce the frequency that volunteers would be needed.

I will give a heads-up of all information as I receive it and coordinate as needed to fill the required positions.

If you can help, contact me at grabthenet@comcast.net or call me 1-734-326-2868.

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