



Driftless Leader

*We are a local chapter of Trout Unlimited serving Crawford, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. Our mission is to **conserve, protect, and restore** coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. We are proud to have helped protect and restore the waters of Southwest Wisconsin for over 30 years.*

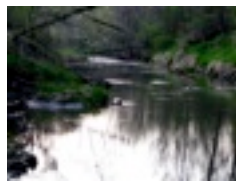
Newsletter for the Coulee Region chapter of Trout Unlimited

April 2011

Zebco Trout Fishing

A young lady catches her first trout this spring.

Page 3



April CRTU Meeting

Will be at the Varsity Club (1910 Ward Avenue, La Crosse) on April 20. Guest presenter will be Jay Thurston, author and fishing educator. Kim McCarthy, TU State Council President, will also be in attendance at our meeting. Dinner and social time begin at 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

May CRTU Meeting

Will be at the USGS building in the Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center (2630 Fanta Reed Rd, La Crosse, near the airport). May's meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

Farewell Dr. Schmidt

Long time CRTU member and all around great guy, Dr. Carl Schmidt, is moving away from the La Crosse area. Good luck to you sir in your new home and new waters.

Story to Tell?

Always looking to share stories from CRTU members in this newsletter. Drop Curt Rees an email with your photo or story. You can also reach him by phone at 608-317-3747 to share something (story or event) for the newsletter.

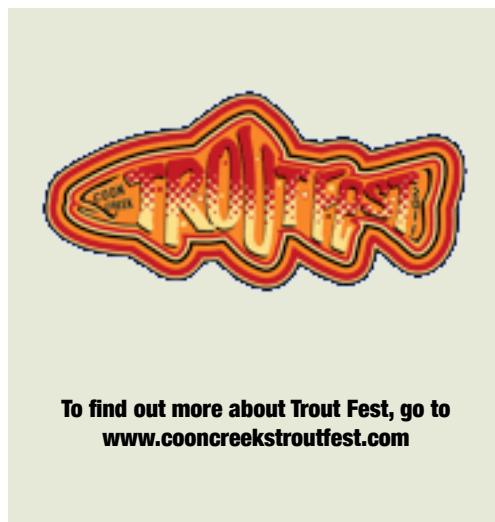
Regular Season Opener

Begins on May 7 at 5 a.m. Early season closes at midnight on May 1.

Coon Creek Trout Fest

Trout Fest will be held in Coon Valley, WI on July 23, 2011.

Things are moving along incredibly well for CCTF! Hopefully you saw us on TV or in the paper! With all of the buzz about the event, we are getting many phone calls and emails from people and groups wanting to get involved. To this point we have received funding from: The Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Wisconsin State Council of TU, Coon Valley Business Association, Wisconsin Friends of TU, Franciscan Skemp -

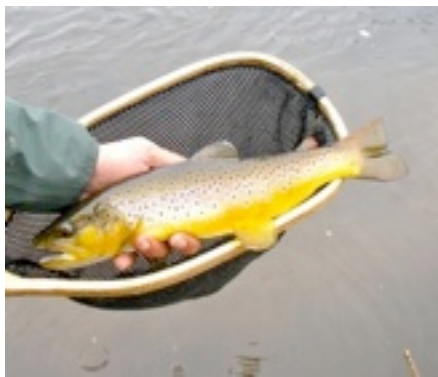


To find out more about Trout Fest, go to www.cooncreektroutfest.com

Mayo Health, and The Westby house! Of course we are still in need of sponsors and funding, so if you have any ideas please email us through the web site or contact Eric Rauch by phone at 608-787-1883. We are

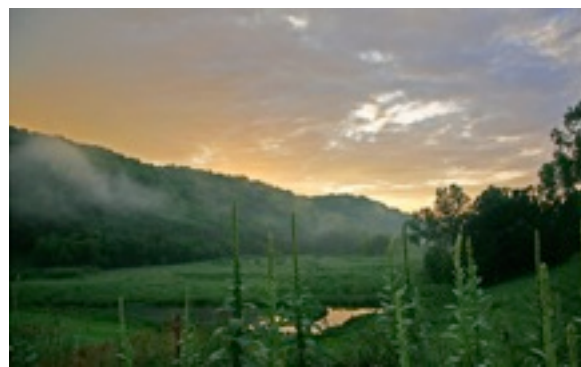
currently working on partnering with the Coon Valley Conservation Club to help host the trout derby and the bobber race, and have some interesting events being planned from 3 Rivers Outdoors, Sage, and Redington! We really, really, really, really need volunteers to help the day of the event, so **PLEASE** contact Eric to get on the list if you are free that day. Even if you only have a couple hours, it will be a great help. This is going to be TU's showcase event and we need a good turnout of folks from our group to make it happen.

Please help spread the word and direct people to our web site at www.Cooncreektroutfest.com.



Early season midge eater

Photo Credit: www.driftnessangler.com



Beautiful Driftless Wisconsin; Photo Credit: Tony Macasaet



Pretty little Mormon Creek brown

CRTU Chapter News

New Meeting Location

The Varsity Club on Ward Avenue will be our home until we find the "perfect location." Finding a spot for our meetings is like exploring a new stream... "there may be an even BETTER spot up around the next bend!" We are actually exploring the idea of having meetings at the new Gander Mountain when it opens. However, this would take away our tradition of having food and drinks at the meetings. Any thoughts on this?

David Dornblaser

Coulee Region TU is excited to welcome David Dornblaser as a member of our CRTU group! David is extremely active in stream restoration in the Driftless area and will be able to create more hands on activities for our group throughout the year! David also hosts the web site Upper Midwest Fly Fishing which contains up-to-date valuable information on our area and resources. Stop by www.uppermidwestflyfishing.com and welcome David to our group!

One More Canoe Raffle

We are raffling off another canoe for Trout Fest. This time it is a Wenonah 16' Adirondack! Tickets will be \$5 each, and we will be selling them at our monthly meetings! If you want to help by selling tickets, please contact Eric.

Local Fly Fishing Lessons

Please join us for the 3rd Annual Youth Outdoor Fest on July 16 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Pettibone Lagoon in LaCrosse, WI. We will have a different layout this year with most of the booths near the blacktop so there will be more wheelchair accessibility. Booths will be closer together in a circular pattern. The activity areas (canoe, kayak, archery, fishing, boats) will be in the same general locations that they were in last year. Please contact Eric Rauch with any questions.

Chapter News Contact

Most of our information goes out during the month in emails. If you are not receiving these emails **PLEASE** let Eric Rauch know and he'll get you on the list! ***If you want off the list you have to fill out a request and fax it to Eric with 3 notarized copies and the CRTU Board will let you know if it is approved. (just kidding)***

Coon Valley Park Clean Up

April 29 and 30 have been scheduled for the Coon Valley Village Park clean up project in preparation for Trout Fest. Clean up will begin at 9 a.m. and go until as long as you can stay.

New CRTU Web Site

The old web site was just too cumbersome for my meager computer skills, so we had to make a change! You will still be able to link to our new site via www.couleeregiontu.org until fall when we will change over the domain name (web lingo). If you have ideas or would like to see something on the site let Eric know.

Driftless Area Banquet and Fundraiser

This will take place May 21 at the West Fork Sportsman's Club

This event is a fundraiser for WFSC and a tribute to Dave Vetrano. Great food will be served, including a pig and lamb roast. The fundraising will include, among other things, both graphite and cane rods to benefit TUDARE and Driftless Area projects. In addition to the banquet, we will be honoring Dave Vetrano for all of his years of outstanding and leading edge stream and habitat improvement. It's fitting that we hold this event at the WFSC as it is the grandfather of stream improvement efforts, not only in the Driftless Area, but nationally as well.

TUDARE (Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort) is also a national standard for stream and habitat work thanks to the efforts and support of the residents of the Driftless Area, local TU chapters, Jeff Hastings, and the resources provided by individuals and groups outside of that area. We invite everyone to join us on May 21st, 2011. We will be inviting all of the MN, IA, WI, and IL TU chapters to join us as well!

Fly Fishing Class

Fly fishing class May 6, 7, and 8

Greg Vodak is teaching the 3rd annual beginning fly fishing class for Sugar Creek Bible Camp on May 6-8. There is a Friday night classroom session with casting instruction on Saturday morning and fishing Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. If people want to attend, the cost is \$100 which includes meals and lodging. Please register through SCBC. Greg could also use some help taking people fishing. If any CRTU members would like to help take people fishing, they can contact Greg at 608-873-5107.

CRTU OFFICERS

President, Eric Rauch
8088rauch@charter.net 608-787-1883

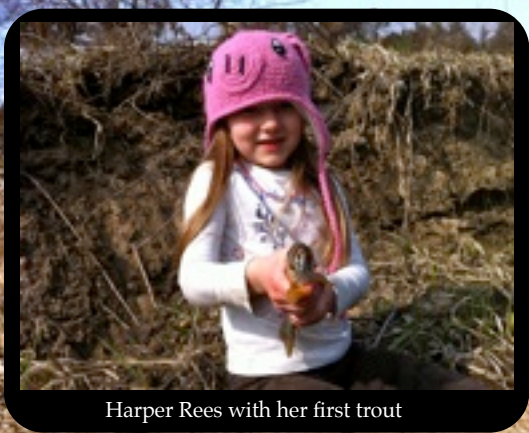
Vice President, Steve Fruechte

Treasurer, Bob Hubbard

Secretary, Curt Rees
curtrees@gmail.com 608-317-3747

Board Member at Large, Rick Kyte

Board Member at Large, Jim Cox



Harper Rees with her first trout



Trout Fishing with a Red Zebco

I had long awaited the day when my kids were old enough to go fishing with me. I have great memories fishing for and catching many walleyes with my dad and two brothers on the Missouri River in South Dakota. We all became pretty good fisherman and were rarely skunked. By the time we were teenagers, we were skilled enough to take the boat out on our own and land a limit of fish. The good memories certainly stick in my mind, but I think I know why Pops had a head full of white hair by the time he was in his mid 30s. Taking young kids fishing is not always a Rockwell moment.

My son Gavin is 8 and my daughter Harper is 5, and I have taken them both fishing with me a few times

this spring. They each have their own rod with a spincast reel and know how to cast. Of course, most of our casting practice had been in the front yard with few snags and plenty of room to whip around their hookless practice lures. Our first foray on the stream this spring consisted of me saying, "You two fish right here. Don't hook each other in the face, but if you do, please don't tell Mom. I'll be way over there fishing." My thought was that they would busy themselves casting and I could use my fly rod, get some peace and quiet, and hopefully land the fish I saw working upstream. It didn't work out that way. Within the first 10 minutes of our outing, each had casted across the stream, snagged up, and broken off their spinners. I grumpily trudged back to them, retied their lines, told them exactly where NOT to cast, and then tried to escape back upstream to the good water. Round 2 lasted about 11 minutes before one had embedded their hook

in their stocking cap and the other had broken off on a tree behind them. I could feel my own hair turning white with frustration.

Gavin had given up at this point and ran off to do some exploring, but 5-year-old Harper was determined to keep fishing. I tucked my rod safely away and stuck with her to help fine tune her cast and ideally avoid any trips to the ER for hook removal. We developed a pretty good system as I'd cast her lure upstream, pass the rod back to her, and tell her to crank hard to keep from getting hung up. To my great surprise, she connected with a brownie after about 5 casts. There was a lot of commotion and squealing (I'll be honest, I did the squealing) as we netted the little fellow and she got to hold it for a quick picture. I know TU and the DNR don't promote hugging and kissing a fish before release, but special considerations should be made for a kid's first trout.

That was the only fish of the day, but Harper and I have gone out a couple other times since. I didn't even bother to bring my own rod so we could continue our cast, pass, and crank method with her Red Zebco. While there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment (and self-congratulation) in landing a trout after delicately placing a fly in just the right spot, it has been rivaled by being the net man to an eager angler wearing a pink hat and polka-dotted mittens.

Thank you Dad for teaching me to be a fisherman and father, and thank you Harper for making me better at both.

Curt Rees is an elementary school principal in Onalaska and the secretary for Coulee Region Trout Unlimited. Harper Rees is a fish loving preschooler at UWL Campus Childcare Center.

Teamwork Helps Stream Work

Well it snowed AGAIN on the 16th of April but that did not stop TU members Clay Rauch, Cy Post, and Eric Rauch from doing some work on a beaver dam blocking fish passage on Mormon Coulee Creek. The work was tough and cold but they managed to take down the water level of the holding pond about 2.5 feet and create a nice flow to let mother nature do the rest. We will be doing more brushing work on Mormon Coulee Creek this spring.

Our next work day will be May 21st at 8:30 a.m. Meet on Hwy M, Mormon Coulee Creek project area. Bring Chain saws, clippers, and gloves, and we will have lunch and beverages!

