



# 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

November 2011

## Notes from new CRTU President

See a chapter update on page 2 from new President, Jim Cox.

## November CRTU Meeting

Will be at the Varsity Club (1910 Ward Avenue, La Crosse) on November 16. The Challenge Academy will be the featured group of the evening. Supper and social time begin at 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

## December CRTU Meeting

Will feature an overview of the stream improvement projects on tap for 2012 and beyond.

## 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.

## Season Openers

Start the countdown to wet a line in Wisconsin waters. Early season begins March 3 and regular season begins May 5.



Photos courtesy of David Dornblaser

## Trout Fest Success

Next summer's Trout Fest will be held in Coon Valley, WI on June 16, 2012.

The first Trout Fest event was held this past summer on July 23 and can certainly be called a success. Over 700 attendees, 66 vendors, and 50+ volunteers made for a great day. Even a quick-moving powerful thunderstorm at noon couldn't put a damper on the day's events. The many kids in attendance had a blast catching the trout stocked in Coon Creek for this event. Casting lessons, fantastic music, vendor wares,



delicious food, and cold drinks kept everyone else smiling on this hot summer day.

A million thanks go to CRTU's Eric Rauch who was the force behind this event and worked hard alongside dedicated members of the Coon Valley Business Association. The high

level of cooperation certainly made this a very enjoyable event for all involved.

Trout Fest 2012 will take place on June 16 and the Fly Fishing Film Tour will hopefully be a featured event. Planning is already underway and we are looking for sponsors to help make the 2nd event even better. Whether it is a financial sponsorship or a community group willing to donate their labor, all help is appreciated. If you would like to be a part of this event or have ideas, please contact Eric Rauch at 8088rauch@charter.net.



Busy vendor tents during Trout Fest 2011



Father and child stalking trout on upper Timber



Last weekend of the year on the La Crosse River

## CRTU Chapter News

### Notes from President, Jim Cox

I hope you had a great summer of fishing and plenty of good memories to go along with it. As we start a new year, I would like to introduce myself as the new President. But first and foremost we need to thank Eric Rauch for all of the work that he has done in the past to keep our club going during his term as President. Eric will still be involved with the club as he will now have a little more time to be focusing on Trout Fest in Coon Valley. So the next time you see him at a meeting or on the water, please thank him for all the work he has done in the past to help keep our club going. David Dornblaser is the new chapter Vice President and his energies will be spent on stream restoration and conservation projects. Bob Hubbard is our current chapter Treasurer, but is looking for someone to take over these responsibilities. However, Bob would like to find a new person to take over the Treasurer position. If you have any questions about this position, please speak to Bob and he can help you get started. If you are interested in helping out with organization of the banquet, stream projects, or helping out in any capacity, please let any of the chapter officers know and we can provide details.

The month of September was our first meeting of the year and we talked about some of the projects that we would like to see in the future and how some of the current projects are going. During October's meeting we heard an update on the Reads Creek project from David Dornblaser. Eric Rauch then gave a presentation on fly fishing for muskies. He's very passionate about this type of fishing and it's hard to capture his great talk here in writing. If you want to get a taste for fly fishing for river muskies in Wisconsin, check out the You Tube video "Musky Country: Zero 2 Hero trailer" by user thirdyearff. This video will definitely accelerate your heart rate!

### So What Happens at CRTU Meetings?

We are making a concerted effort to increase attendance at our monthly meetings. We have over 200 members in the chapter, but meeting attendance is usually 10-15 members. Chapter meetings aren't that scary! Meeting nights start at 6 p.m. with supper, beverages, fishing stories, and other chit chat. We take care of some chapter business starting at 7 p.m. and then have a presentation of some sort for another 30 minutes. Most meeting nights wrap up around 8 p.m. If you are looking for a relaxing night out to talk about fishing (honey holes, fly patterns, vacation destinations, etc.), then join us for a meeting this winter.

### November Meeting

Our next chapter meeting will be on November 16 at the Varsity Club (1910 Ward Avenue) in La Crosse. Supper, beverages, and social hour are from 6-7 p.m. and the meeting itself begins at 7 p.m. Our special presentation will be about the Challenge Academy program and how it benefits from the help of CRTU and also how they will help our restoration/improvement projects.

### December Meeting

Interested in hearing about upcoming restoration and improvement projects in the Coulee Region? This will be the meeting for you. Driftless Area Project Manager, David Dornblaser, will give an overview of the projects in the pipeline for 2012 and beyond. Like usual, supper and fish talk from 6-7 p.m. Short business meeting and project presentation to begin at 7 p.m.

### Beaver Patrol

Beavers have been damming up some of the streams in our area. Once the beavers have established an area in which to stay, they tend to stay for awhile. They can cause backups in the water levels and prevent fish from moving up or down streams. The DNR wants to know about any types of these structures being built on any of the streams in our areas. Not because they don't have the proper permits to build a structure and pay a permit fee, of course, but for all of the damage that can

occur from them building the dams. Scot Stewart from the DNR is the contact person to whom you can voice your concern. His number is (608) 273-5967. He has a list of trappers that will trap the beavers and take care of the dams.



### CRTU T-Shirts

Interested in purchasing a CRTU t-shirt? Prices will be about \$15 and just send Eric Rauch an email with your shirt size. 8088rauch@charter.net

## 2012 CRTU Banquet

The 2012 Coulee Region TU banquet will be held on February 24.

The 2012 Coulee Region TU Banquet will be at Cedar Creek Country Club in Onalaska on February 24. If you know of any business or organization that could donate raffle items or if you come across any bigger items for us to purchase for the banquet, please let an officer know. Please provide the contact information for the person or business that has an item to donate. We will be calling for volunteers to help with the banquet in the near future.

### CRTU OFFICERS

Jim Cox, President

cswoodworking@charter.net

David Dornblaser, Driftless Area Project Manager  
driftless@couleestreams.com

Bob Hubbard, Treasurer

Curt Rees, Secretary (newsletter editor)  
curtrees@gmail.com

## WI TU Honors Duke Welter



The

national Trout Unlimited organization awarded its top volunteer honor to John "Duke" Welter, of Eau Claire, WI. TU President and CEO Chris Wood presented him with the award at the Annual Meeting in Bend, Oregon. The Ray Mortensen Award for Outstanding Volunteer Leadership is granted annually to an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to local coldwater fisheries conservation efforts.

Duke has spent many years protecting Wisconsin's streams from the impacts of mining, outdated small dams, uncontrolled water bottling, wetland losses, misguided development, and poor land uses. He was one of the leaders of the effort to develop one of TU's most innovative volunteer-driven projects -- the Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE). Duke also led our grassroots National Leadership Council (NLC) for three years and served on TU's Board of Trustees for seven years. Wisconsin's NLC Representative Bill Heart writes, "Duke has that unique ability to look at a problem or an opportunity, figure out what needs to be done, who to involve, where to find the resources to succeed and then get it done." Past president of the Southeast Wisconsin Chapter Henry Koltz writes, "Quite simply, there is no one who has given more of their life - professionally, personally, publicly and privately - to the mission of coldwater conservation." For this, we congratulate Duke.

Need a trout fishing fix this winter until Wisconsin waters are open again in March? Then check out these two websites from David Dornblasser.

[www.couleestreams.com](http://www.couleestreams.com) (Still being developed, but keep your eye on this site for specific information about our local water.)

[www.uppermidwestflyfishing.com](http://www.uppermidwestflyfishing.com) (This site has a fantastic online discussion forum and beautiful photos shared by site users.)

## Trout fishing in Ireland, much like some days in Wisconsin

*Curt Rees had high hopes for a day on the water fishing for trout in County Galway, Ireland.*

This past summer my wife's job took our family to Ireland for the month of June. While we were there



my Father's Day gift was a trout fishing trip with ghillie (their term for fishing guide) Patrick Molloy (pictured left) on Lough Corrib in Western Ireland north of

Galway. Corrib is a large lake with tea colored water and limestone bedrock. In the lake, there is a healthy population of pike, brown trout, and ferox (like a brown lake trout). A lot of fisherman spend most of their time trolling for ferox in the deeper water, but Patrick and I went after the browns in shallower water using tandem dry mayflies fished out of the boat. We'd cast downwind of the boat and then pick up the line as we drifted toward our flies. Wish I could report on the fantastic success we had that day, but we were skunked as we battled a nasty cold front coming through the area. We did raise a few fish and had some blow ups, but it was obvious that nothing was going to turn on anytime soon. Well, what do we do here in Wisconsin after a tough day of fishing? That's right, you climb a high stool



with a good beer and happily complain about how hard you worked with little to show for it. Not the most exciting fish story to share, but certainly is a trip I'd do again.

## May Pig Roast

*The spring pig roast will take place on May 19 at the Norskedalen center north of Coon Valley. Put this event on your calendar now so you won't miss it.*

The second annual Driftless TU spring banquet will be Saturday, May 19 at the Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center outside Coon Valley. There will be a pig roast served alongside other delicious local food (Amish pies!) and beverages. Proceeds from food sales, raffles, and other activities will all benefit local stream improvement work. There will be presentations by the DNR and TU chapters on the upcoming projects. The main events officially begin at 3 p.m., but we highly recommend that you arrive earlier to give you time to tour the Norskedalen grounds and exhibits. Check out [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org) for more information about this wonderful place.

This is an open event but we are reaching out to TU members, spouses, friends, DNR staff, other stream professionals, Driftless landowners, and anyone who is interested in conservation and improvement projects in our beautiful Driftless area. Tickets are \$12.50 each and can be purchased via PayPal by visiting [www.couleestreams.com](http://www.couleestreams.com) or by sending a check (payable to CRTU) to Bob Hubbard at 483 Lark Lane, West Salem WI, 54669.

## Flies Needed!

We are again asked to donate some flies to the 2012 State Trout Unlimited banquet that will take place in February. They are asking each club from around the state to have



members tie some of their favorite flies. They are looking for around 70 to 90 flies to be placed in a custom wooden box that was made for the banquet with our club name engraved on

the top. Last year over \$2800.00 was raised because of this part of the banquet.

We are also accepting fly donations for a raffle prize for our own CRTU banquet. If you can do either of these, please let Jim Cox know.

# CRTU Stream Improvements

This past September, Coulee Region TU completed work on a stream improvement project on Upper Reads Creek outside of Viroqua. The photos below show some of this work. This portion of Reads Creek is a brookie spawning area and is crucial for the health of the brook trout population on that stream. In addition to improving the banks to better deal with flooding events, we installed in-stream structures including: boulders, tree root wads, and bank logs to provide protection for the young brook trout.

In 2012 Coulee Region TU will be working on Cook Creek in Vernon County. This stream has sustained serious damage from the various flooding events over the years. Like Upper Reads Creek, it is a brook trout spawning area. In addition to working on the riparian corridor, the project will also include improvement work on 38 acres of adjacent upland property.

To learn more about how you can be a part of future stream projects, please attend the December 21 CRTU meeting or contact David Dornblaser at [driftless@couleestreams.com](mailto:driftless@couleestreams.com). No matter if you are a stream work veteran or newbie, there is a job for all in these important and satisfying projects.

