

TROUT TIMES



Vanguard
Chapter

Volume 15 Number 2

A Publication of Vanguard Chapter Trout Unlimited

www.vanguardtu.org

EXPO MAKES FOR VANGUARD WINNERS

By Joe Barker

WARREN—Either members bought most all the tickets for the Vanguard Chapter's annual raffle at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo or they defied the odds and are the luckiest people around. I like to think it's the latter, at least I know that's the case after having fished with many of them.

Of the 1421 one-dollar raffle tickets sold at this year's Expo, it was two members of Vanguard whose names were drawn out of the bucket on Sunday at the show's end.

Ron Deaton was rewarded for his volunteer work at the Vanguard booth, selling tickets no less, as the first place winner with a weekend for two at River-view Lodge & Cabins located on the Au Sable River at McMaster's Bridge.

This is a sweet stretch of prime trout fishing just below the Holy Waters. The cabins themselves have been recently updated and decorated with Joe Barker's framed trout flies. The accommodations are quant and comfortable with a great view and easy access to the river. The McMaster's Bridge public access and boat launch is across the street from the lodge making a float trip while staying there all the more convenient.

The second place ticket belonged to Roger Larock, a Vanguard member from Royal Oak, who will have the option of either floating the upper Manistee or Au Sable River with longtime Vanguard member and past-president Tom Quail. Tom purchased his 12-foot Stealthcraft drift boat at last year's Expo and has been the envy of many a member since.

Those of us who have had the

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- *Paint Creek Improvements*
- *Work Weekend*
- *Stream Science*
- *Paint Creek Survey*
- *Opening Day*
- *President's Corner*
- *Adopt-A-Stream*

privilege of joining Tom on a float are impressed with the roominess of the boat even though it is one of Stealthcraft's more compact models. It is perfect for Michigan's smaller rivers, like the Holy Waters section of the Au Sable.

Please see *EXPO*, next page.



Vanguard members Scott Hummon, Joe Swantek, and Larry Butts at the Expo.

EXPO

Continued from prior page.

As a riverboat captain, Tom is getting quite adept at keeping his passengers from being beached and out of logjams as he mans the oars from the center of the boat. The front of the boat is the prime spot for standing and casting, but there are also knee locks for a second fisherman directly behind the oarsman, who can catch all the fish the first guy misses. Just try not to knock the captain's hat off or imbed a hook in his ear when casting.

Serving as the Vanguard Chapter's chief fundraising event of the year, the sale of raffle tickets did not disappoint, although revenues were not as hefty as last year, which had been an exceptional.

Total revenue from sales of tickets this year totaled \$1,213.83, which after expenses resulted in a net profit of \$846.32. By comparison, at last year's Expo raffle, 1500 tickets were sold with a net revenue of \$1,205.88.

Like last year, pre-show sales of raffle tickets were more than direct sales at the Expo on Saturday. Much of those pre-show sales are attributable to the PayPal account set up by Jeff Gerwitz and Tom Quail specifically for that purpose.

While sales on Saturday at this year's Expo, which typically is the busier day, were comparable to 2014, Sunday's sales were rather disappointing. Attendance on Sunday appeared down even more so than years past despite favorable weather conditions (maybe the weather was too good!). That resulted in almost a third fewer tickets being sold on Sunday as compared to Saturday.

There wasn't just an impact on raffle ticket sales on Sunday. Only a paltry number of flies and shadow boxes were sold by Vanguard Fly Tying that shared the cost of the booth.

As Chapter Treasurer Joe Swantek summarized, "Thanks to everyone who sold tickets before the event and at the show. We came very close to the 2014

results on ticket sales. The pre-sales again were the reason we did well. Sunday is always a hard day for sales."

Despite lower revenue, the Expo was a rousing success for the Chapter. The number of new members signed up during the Expo (10) matched last year, giving the Chapter needed new blood. Those new members hopefully will provide energy and ideas for making the

Vanguard Chapter even more of a success with its coldwater conservation efforts.

Further, the Expo provided the opportunity for many Vanguard members to mingle at a premier fly fishing event. It offered plenty of opportunities to purchase the latest in fly fishing gear and to attend some very informative and helpful seminars led by renowned fishermen.

INSIGHTS PROVIDED ON PAINT CREEK STREAM IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

By Jeff Gerwitz



ROCHESTER— Nick Banda, the Deputy City Manager of Rochester, was the guest speaker at the Vanguard Chapter's April general membership meeting. He spoke about the recent restoration work on Paint Creek and the plans for more work this summer.

Two years ago, the City of Rochester restored portions of Paint Creek in Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve and Municipal Park. Paint Creek is a designated trout stream and is part of the Clinton River Coldwater Conservation Project – a regional effort to restore a trout fishery in the urbanized Clinton River Area of Concern.

This work was paid for by a \$750,000 federal grant funded by the

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This project is a critical component of the City's effort to restore over a mile of Paint Creek, improve water quality, and establish an urban green corridor.

A natural channel design approach was used to restore riffles, runs, pools and glides that emulate upstream reference conditions. Where possible, floodplain connectivity was restored and gabions were partially removed or vegetated. Mini-rock and log vanes, boulder clusters with micro-pools, stream bank shrub plantings, and a deeper thalweg channel are designed to improve temperature, cover, sediment transport, and habitat.

Please see *PAINT CREEK*, next page.

PAINT CREEK

Continued from prior page.

Over 16 miles of fish passage has been restored. This work will benefit the in-stream fish population and improve water quality and recreational opportunities for local residents. This work has survived surprisingly well, with very little damage in spite of two harsh winters.

The City has received another significant grant to continue the work, which will take place this summer from the Rochester Road Bridge downstream to the bend behind the city library. This work may provide volunteer work for our Chapter members throughout the summer.

Nick also spoke about another project which is on the Clinton River, underneath the Rochester Road Bridge. A 131-unit residential project will be built near the river. This project will include work on the river from Paint Creek to Second Street. This will include removal of contaminated soil near the river, relocating the walking/biking trail, replacing approximately 1,000 trees, building retaining walls, and installing about 500 limestone slabs.

This work is estimated to cost about \$1,200,000. Hubble, Roth & Clark, the engineers which designed the Paint Creek restoration, is expected to design this project also.

Finally, Nick spoke about a desire to build a handicapped fishing area on Paint Creek or the Rochester Pond. There will be more information on this project shortly.

TROUT TIMES

Published quarterly by the
Vanguard Chapter Trout
Unlimited.

Larry Butts, President
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2015 VGTU Annual Conservation Project Weekend

By Larry Walla

VANDERBILT—Vanguard Chapter TU members! Mark your calendars for the annual conservation project weekend scheduled for **August 8th and 9th** on the Black River in the Pigeon River Country State Forest (PRCSF).

We will be working with The Upper Black River Council and Huron Pines for a day of in-stream habitat improvement work.

Vanguard members have been working in the PRCSF for more than 20 years now doing various in-stream and stream bank restoration with the Upper Black River Council and Huron Pines.

As with the past two years, we will be staying in the PRCSF Staff House located on the banks of the Pigeon River both Friday and Saturday. Saturday meals and Sunday morning breakfast will be provided.

Last year 20 Vanguard volunteers stayed at the PRCSF Staff House for the conservation weekend in early August. At least a half dozen of the volunteers

were first timers, including some teenagers who accompanied their parents. Shari Walla, my wife, also worked on the project.

So if you're new to the Chapter this is a great opportunity to meet other members while at the same time assisting in one of Vanguard's most important conservation projects.

This is not just about stream work and great food though. The Pigeon and nearby Black rivers provide great brook and brown trout fishing with beautiful scenery. There are seldom any other fishermen to crowd you.

If you would like to be added to the sign-up sheet or would like more details on the event contact me by email at larry.walla@att.net or call me at: 248-819-0933.

I will send out details for directions to the staff house, what to bring, times, etc. to participants as the event draws closer. Looking forward to hearing from you.



Vanguard TU Members Discuss Stream Science at the March Meeting

By Jeremy Geist

ROCHESTER—During the March membership meeting, I was given the opportunity to speak with Vanguard Chapter members about general stream ecology and aquatic insect biology.

As fishermen and conservationists, it is important to have a basic understanding of stream processes, food web dynamics, and aquatic insect biology. This not only heightens our experience when fishing in a river, but increases our understanding and appreciation of the complexities that exist in the stream and the surrounding landscape.

It may not be readily apparent to many that spend time in or near a river, but the connections that exist within the

viduals/m². For fisherman, this event is equivalent to a holiday and we often schedule some of our first fishing outings to coincide with the hatch.

For fish and many other stream and riparian consumers, the event is just as, if not more, important. Fish, bats, birds, spiders, lizards, and other animals rely on emergent aquatic insects as a substantial food resource. During the Hex hatch, we can observe the feeding frenzy that is taking place among the fish community. But beyond the stream there are many other animals indulging in the mayfly buffet. Annually, birds have been accounted to derive anywhere up to 100% of their dietary needs from emergent aquatic insects. Horizontal orb-web spi-

the actual organism our artificial flies are trying to replicate and can lend insight when we find ourselves fishing in a stream trying to “match the hatch.” Common fly patterns we examined were the Hendrickson, Adams, and Blue-winged Olive and compared them to their aquatic insect counterparts (*Hexagenia*, *Isonychia*, and *Baetis* mayflies), taking note of their physiology, color, and other anatomical characteristics.

We also examined a variety of other common dry flies and nymphs, such as caddis flies, stoneflies, midges, and dragon and damselflies. Overall, we all hopefully learned a little more about stream science and aquatic insects, as well as deepened our interest in the subject.

As fisherman and conservationists, it benefits us to enjoy the outdoors and to appreciate the details of the environment and the organisms that inhabit them. It is often said that the first stream ecologists were fly fishermen wanting to know how to catch more fish!



Above: Adams fly pattern and mayfly counterpart.

river, up and downstream, as well as the connections that exist between the stream and surrounding landscape are vast. Streams and terrestrial areas adjacent to them, often called riparian zones, are closely linked by the exchange of organic and inorganic materials such as leaves, wood, sediment, nutrients, and organisms.

For example (as Michigan fishermen are well aware), each spring “Hex” mayflies (*Hexagenia limbata*) transition from their nymph life stage to adults, in what results in a colossal “hatch.” It has been estimated that the densities of these Hex hatches can reach up to 24,000 indi-

ders (Tetragnathidae) have adapted to position their webs along the riparian edge of streams and by doing so derive 53-100% of their carbon from emergent aquatic insects.

Aquatic insects and the terrestrial consumers that depend on them as a food resource help describe the link that exist between water and land. There are many more examples that detail connections between what we have traditionally thought to be “distinct” ecosystems.

After a brief introduction of basic stream ecology, we looked at commonly used fly patterns and the insects they mimic. This exercise helped us visualize

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Volunteers Needed for Work on Paint Creek Survey

By Jeff Gerwitz

ROCHESTER—The Vanguard Chapter of Trout Unlimited in cooperation with the Clinton River Watershed Council will be surveying the gear restricted section of Paint Creek to determine areas that will require restoration.

Our mission is to complete the survey of the five-mile stretch by the end of May 2015 so that teams can work throughout the summer to remedy the problems identified in the survey. Specifically, we will locating and describing areas where bank erosion is occurring, fallen trees are restricting or blocking fish passage, and road crossing that are blocking fish passage or causing erosion. Additionally, teams will work to remove trash in this area.

In order to complete this mission we will be looking to create three teams, each having at least three people. Some teams will work during the week while others will work weekends. Photographs tagged with GPS coordinates will define and locate the problem areas and help us to determine what will be needed for the work crews that will follow.

This is a real opportunity for our Chapter to make a difference in our Home Waters. Please contact our Conservation Chair, Eli Stanesa at estanesa@vanguardtu.org for more information and to volunteer.



BIG CHILL STILL HOLDS GRIP ON OPENING DAY

By Joe Barker



GRAYLING—Although the weather was sunny and the temperature hovered in the mid-50s for Opening Day of trout season, the water was still chilled. It barely reached the upper 40s on the Manistee River below the CR 612 bridge.

The result was predictable. In fact, it could be called the weekend of the vanishing fish. Even though there were sporadic hatches of Hendricksons, Black Stoneflies, and Blue-wing Olives, there were no fish to be found.

The water level was only a tad high and ran rather clear. Bugs surfed and danced on the surface after the mid-day warm up on both Saturday and Sunday, but not a single trout raised its nose to intercept them.

The Vanguard Trout Fishing Team, consisting of Joe Swantek, John Sabina, Al Woody, James Singer, and myself were skunked even though we relentlessly tossed everything in our vest at them. Fishing every conceivable type of nymph and streamer underwater seemed like the best way of tempting a fish.

But not even hand grenades would have worked.

The clarity of the water allowed for easy viewing of some of the favorite holes and trout hiding places, but in each case no one was home. Some in the group attributed it to the Common Merganser that has nested in the tree across the river for the past couple years. But last year's fishing hadn't been affected by the bird setting up shop and it seemed unlikely that one bird could clean out an entire half-mile of river.

No, the trout were there somewhere. They were simply hunkered down under logs and overhanging banks, waiting for warming weather to stir their cold blood. Overnight temperatures still dove into the low 20s, negating any warming effect the sun had during the day. The last of the snow had just melted on Friday.

Despite, the lack the fish, there was still plenty of good food, cold beer, and lively conversation at the Barker cabin. Many world problems were solved.

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Any questions or to book your trip – just email at kelly@michiganstreamside.com or call at 989-889-5374.

President's Corner

By Lawrence Butts



as well this year.

We started the year with enthusiasm and hit the ground running - and we haven't stopped.

I wanted to thank our Vice President Jeff Gerwitz for organizing a get-away weekend at Riverview Lodge last April. Although a bit cold for fishing it was a weekend away from home and a chance to raise a few hundred dollars from those who came up.

Attendance at our regular meetings and our fly tying nights continue to grow and we even had four new members attend our last meeting. If you haven't come to a meeting in a while, May and June will be good time to come back.

We had to move the dates for the regular meeting to May 21st and our monthly fly tying get-together to May 28th due to scheduling conflicts. You may remember that the survey we conducted last year found that a majority of the members would like to hold some meetings at a restaurant.

We didn't forget either so both of the May meetings will be held at Avery's Tavern, a new restaurant located in the same building as the former Chapman's Mill where we used to meet for fly tying. It is in the strip mall on the northwest corner of Crooks and M-59.

At the May meeting there will be a Swap Meet so plan to buy and/or sell any gear you please. Come early and have

dinner before the meeting. It should be a lot of fun.

Fly tying will also be held at Avery's Tavern from now on. And Vice President Jeff Gerwitz advises that everyone surveyed agreed to continue to hold monthly fly tying sessions throughout the summer months.

May 14 - 17 will be our annual fishing fundraising weekend which is booked to capacity. Many thanks to Scott Hummon for once again organizing this event.

Our June meeting will be held on June 4th at the Rochester Park, behind the police station in Downtown Rochester. We will be meeting on the other side of the bridge at the clearing where we will be holding a casting clinic, instructed by Dave Leonhard of the Streamside Orvis in Travis City and of the Michigan TU Fly Fishing School.

This will be a good meeting to bring a son, daughter, friend, relative, or spouse who wants to learn how to cast. *Please note that this date is a week earlier than our normal meeting time due to a conflict with the fly fishing school.*

As I write this, our three Adopt-A-Stream teams made their spring surveys last week. Water levels are a bit low but healthy, based on the amount and variety of "bugs" found.

Larry Walla has secured the CCC cabin for our August work weekend in Pigeon River country with Huron Pines. Please contact Larry to sign up to help.

Conservation Chair and Board member Eli Stanesa, has ensured us a busy summer on Paint Creek. Our first

Please see *PRESIDENT*, next page.

PRESIDENT

Continued from prior page

project will be to conduct a survey of the gear restricted section of Paint Creek (approximately 5 miles) by the end of May. The survey will map areas where large woody debris is restricting flow or causing other damage, and areas with bank erosion and trash.

Photographs tagged with the GPS location will be attached to the survey to develop corrective action plans and assign priorities. Each survey will also record land ownership, water depth, flow, type of bottom, whether or not the site is accessible to heavy equipment,

type of repairs needed, and what types of equipment will be required.

Assisted by Jeff Gerwitz and Ron Elzerman, Eli and his team organized this in cooperation with the Clinton River Watershed Council who bring expertise, equipment, and funds. Look for photographs and a summary of the survey in an upcoming newsletter.

Our goal is to complete the survey by the end of May. With restoration projects to follow.

So far this year, the Vanguard has authorized the following donations:

- \$250 to Dinosaur Hill Nature Center for their educational work with children. They also allow us to meet three times a month for meetings.
- \$250 To Huron Pines for their ongoing work on Coldwater Restoration Projects. We will be working with them again this August on a restoration project providing sweat equity in addition to this money.
- \$500 to Michigan Trout Unlimited to help purchase a barge shocker that is needed to conduct fish surveys on larger water than the current backpack device is capable of.
- \$500 to Michigan TU for general conservation activities.

Additional donations are budgeted and planned, but the board has decided to monitor the donations as they occur during the next few months so that our spending does not exceed our income.




VANGUARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN CRWC ADOPT-A-STREAM

By Joe Barker

ROCHESTER—Four members of the Vanguard Chapter, Larry Butts, Larry Walla, Sherri Walla, and John Sabina participated in the Clinton River Watershed Council’s Adopt-A-Stream program on May 2.



The Adopt-A-Stream program empowers community members to protect local streams and rivers through water quality monitoring. Volunteers are assigned sites and teams, given equipment, data sheets and protocols, and sent out to gather information on streamside habitat and macroinvertebrate populations.



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