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VANGUARD TACKLES LARGE WOODY DEBRIS SURVEY AND CLEAN-UP

By Eli Stanesa and Jeff Gerwitz

ROCHESTER HILLS—Last year the Vanguard Chapter conducted a large woody debris (LWD) survey of the Gear Restricted Section of Paint Creek. This section of the creek runs from Gunn Road to Tienken Road and is considered “special waters” by the DNR and by all of those who fly fish it.

This survey work was done on two Saturdays in May and June of 2015 by 12 of our members. From the approximately 60 sites identified during this survey, more than 20 were determined to be critical.

Last July and October, the Chapter partnered with other local TU Chapters in two LWD cleanups planned by the Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC). By all accounts the surveying and the LWD cleanups were successful.

Once the spring runoff was over and the water levels were down, making the creek wadable, conservation efforts resumed. The Chapter has very ambitious plans for 2016.

First, the Chapter is planning to conduct a LWD survey of the upper part

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of the creek from the dam at Lake Orion to the beginning of the Gear Restricted Section at Gunn Road. This stretch is about seven miles long with access points from Paint Creek Trail or a public roadway every mile or so. The survey will be done by wading the creek, identifying LWD sites, taking pictures and recording coordinates of each site. Areas of bank erosion will also be noted. It is estimated that the work on this upper part will require two teams of three or four members working three Saturday mornings for three or four hours.

After surveying this upper part of the creek, the Chapter plans to survey the lower part from the end of the Gear Restricted Section at Tienken Road to the Clinton River. This stretch of the creek is about two miles long and is accessible at numerous locations. It is estimated that the work on this lower part will take two teams of three or four members working one Saturday morning for about three or four hours. Completion of this stretch would finalize the entire survey of Paint Creek.

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PAINT CREEK

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THE FIRST OF THESE SURVEYS IS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, JULY 23, FROM 9 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M., WITH LUNCH PROVIDED.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

Anyone interested in participating please contact:

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Specific plans and instructions will follow.

Concurrently with this survey work, the CRWC plans to organize two or three major LWD cleanups in the Gear Restricted Section of the creek. Our Chapter will be joining other TU Chapters in this effort. It is expected that each of these projects will be set for a Saturday morning and will require 15 to 20 people working three or four hours.

The first of those debris clean-ups was recently held on June 18. The site was on Paint Creek, just off of the trail, south of Silverbell Road. Vanguard members Tom Lasek, Al Wood, Eli Stanesa, Gordon McCall, and Jeff Gerwitz met Matt Einheuser from CRWC and a couple of Clinton Valley TU members at the trail about 8:30 that morning.

As can be seen from the picture accompanying this article, volunteers had their work cut out for them. With some skillful chainsaw handling from Matt and Al, the crew was able to make quick work of this logjam.

After an hour and half to two hours of work, the stream was flowing smoothly and we were able to remove enough of the major logs to prevent a future jam. Even though this is a small stream, the Chapter's 2015 survey identified many major logjams in the creek.

These jams have been created by the death of ash trees that eventually fall into the creek and the flashy, high water events that occur during the year. With the information provided by our 2015 survey, the CRCCP team has selected the top 10 sites for removal. This was the

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Annual River Conservation Project Weekend

August 12, 13 & 14, 2016

By Jeff Gerwitz

VANDERBILT—The Pigeon River Country State Forest was created in October 1973 by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). It's located in the Northern Lower Peninsula. It started out as 95,000 acres and has grown over the years to more than 105,000 acres and is home to the largest wild free roaming elk herd east of the Mississippi river.

Of course, it is also home to three of Michigan's beautiful rivers, the Sturgeon, Pigeon and Black. This is where Vanguard Chapter members will be heading for the weekend of August 12th-14th to participate in our annual conservation project with the Upper Black River Council (UBRC).

Our project will be either a continuation of last year's project of in-stream structure placement or a bank stabilization project. Both projects are on the Black River, but the Chapter has not received an update on which project has been chosen for us as of this writing. It will be a fulfilling experience no matter what the project is.

Volunteers will be staying in the MDNR Staff House which is on the bank of the Pigeon River. The Staff House comes complete with a kitchen, common room, a large bunk room that sleeps sixteen, a large bathroom with a couple stalls, shower, sinks, and a small bunk room with attached half bath (women's quarters) that sleeps four.

The bunks are supplied with a mattress and all you need is your sleeping bag and pillow. A flat sheet or something to use as a mattress cover is suggested. This is a building with "rustic charm" and is not your typical hotel, but

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Riverview Lodge Adds Fly Shop & Accommodations

By Joe Barker

LUZERNE—This year’s Vanguard Chapter annual outing at Riverview Lodge and Cabins was a resounding success. More than 25 chapter members enjoyed a tasty fish fry on Friday upon arrival and huge steaks on Saturday after a full day of fishing.

The weather fully cooperated, providing plentiful mayfly, stonefly, and caddis hatches throughout the day and evening, making for successful fishing by most everyone at the outing.

Besides fishing the mainstream of the Au Sable River where the lodge is located, members ventured to the South and North Branches of the Au Sable and experienced equal success.

Next year could be even better. Or at least bigger. Riverview is adding a fly shop and additional first class accommodations just down the road from the current lodge.

The manager of the fly shop, in charge of getting the operation going, is Vanguard member Tom Quail. He has been working diligently to fully equip the shop with everything needed for a successful day on the water.

The shop will also stock a full array of cold beverages and hopes to get a liquor license to make even more refreshing libations available.

The loft area above the fly shop has sleeping accommodations for at least eight people with an open floor plan and a fully equipped kitchen and dining area. There are two bathrooms and adjoining showers. A huge wide screen TV is available for viewing pleasure.

Plans are for the fly shop to be fully operational by mid-July and is open to the general public, not just guests of Riverview Lodge. Make sure to stop by for gear and refreshments if you happen to be in the area.

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third woody debris site on the list that has been cleaned up to date and the hope is to do at least two every year.

The Vanguard Chapter is also considering undertaking two smaller LWD cleanup projects in the Gear Restricted Section of the creek. These projects would be selected with the assistance of the CRWC and would contemplate eight to ten of members working three or four hours on two Saturday mornings.

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it does provide a roof over our heads. Those wishing to do so are welcome to bring a tent and pitch it in the yard of the Staff House as well. There are several hotels and accommodations in the Gaylord and surrounding areas for those wishing to opt out of staying at the Staff House.

Other items needed for the weekend are your personal gear such as clothes, work gloves, boots, and towel and of course, fishing gear. Vanguard provides the lodging and food for Saturday breakfast and dinner (Saturday lunch is provided by UBRC) and Sunday morning breakfast.

The Black and Pigeon Rivers provide fishing opportunities to members on Friday upon arrival for the work weekend and after work on the project is completed on Saturday. Plenty of fishing is also available on Sunday.

Canada Creek, another stream in the area that the Chapter has worked on in past years, provides more fishing opportunities.

Both rivers are known for good brook trout fishing, with some hefty brown trout mixed in for good measure. Hatches during the work weekend should include Tricos during the morning, hoppers and ants during midday, and caddis in the evening.

Please consider joining us on this rewarding and fun weekend. Work on the project is actually August 13th and volunteers are welcome to come just for the day if they are unable to stay Friday through Sunday.

Please Note that a head count is needed a few days prior to the outing so plans can be made for the correct amount of food.

For more details and to sign-up for this event contact Larry Walla by phone: 248-819-0933.
or email: lwalla@vanguardtu.org

CASTING CLINIC REELS IN VANGUARD MEMBERS

By Jeff Gerwitz



ROCHESTER HILLS—Our June meeting was a casting clinic put on by Dave Leonhard of Streamside Orvis in Traverse City.

Dave Leonhard is a master certified fly casting instructor for the Federation of Fly Fishers, casting instructor for the Michigan Council TU Fly Fishing School, a life member of TU, a charter member of the Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited in Traverse City, Michigan, owner of Orvis Streamside in Traverse City, and director of instruction for the Orvis Michigan Fly Fishing School at the Homestead Resort in Glen Arbor, Michigan.

Dave took 16 members and a couple of bystanders through a number of casting lessons. Not only were these group lessons, but Dave took the time to give everyone a personal lesson.

He didn't turn us into pros but we were all casting a lot better than we were the day before. The highlight of the evening was learning how to double haul. With Dave's expert guidance, he turned a difficult and sometimes confusing cast into something fairly

easy. I think we were all amazed at how far we could cast – I know I was.

Hopefully, Dave will return for another clinic in the future. If he does, try not to miss it.

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BUG HATCHES AND FEEDING FISH RIGHT ON SCHEDULE

By Joe Barker

GRAYLING—There was not a lot of optimism that Opening Day on the last Saturday of April would hold much promise in the way of hatches or feeding fish. Turns out, both the bugs and the fish cooperated.

On the upper Manistee River, there were Hendricksons, Black Stoneflies, and Caddis that enticed Brookies and small Browns to the surface in the late afternoon.

Water temperatures and levels were pretty much where they should have been for this time of year, a departure from the last couple years when rain and cooler temperatures put a damper on Opening Day prospects.

Adams and Hendrickson Parachutes, and dark Caddis patterns, proved effective the first weekend of the regular season, although fish were generally small to middling. But at least there were fish to be had for dry fly enthusiasts with no need to lose nymphs on snags and dragging streamers through dark holes.

Pleasant temperatures over the course of the next two weeks in Northern Michigan, oftentimes above normal, kept the Hendricksons active through early May until they yielded to Sulphurs and Little Mahoganies Mayflies and Little Yellow Stoneflies.

Those were the bugs de jour during Vanguard's annual outing at Riverview Lodge on the Au Sable. Both floaters and waders found good fishing over the weekend; a contrast to prior years when the bugs often showed up, but not the fish. This year, the warmer temperatures allowed the water temperature to rise

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enough to get the motors running on the trout.

Besides parachute patterns to match the hatches, along with Caddis patterns to match both the Stoneflies and the Caddis, swinging wet flies at this time of year proved particularly effective. This was true especially on the North Branch where a lot of smaller, eager Brookies and Browns frolicked chasing emerging Stoneflies and Caddis.

However, the big boys were still playing hard to get as far as dry fly fishermen were concerned. That all changed as the calendar flipped from May to June. By early to mid-June, reliable Brown Drakes could be found where they were supposed to be in both the Au Sable and Manistee River systems as the Sulphurs and Pale Evening Duns began to taper off.

On the upper Manistee below CR-612 where my cabin is located, reliable Bat Fly spinner falls tempted some nice fish to the surface for 15-30 minutes of consistent action from fish both small and good-sized.

I convinced Ann Miller to share her knowledge of the somewhat mysterious Bat Fly for the summer issue of Michigan Trout, which makes good reading, especially for those anglers who aren't familiar with this particular mayfly.

Lack of knowledge about the fly can result in some befuddling fishing since it oftentimes overlaps with Brown Drake action and the beginning of the Hex emergence.

Using the wrong fly when Bat Flies are on the surface is a big mistake that many

fishermen make, not realizing that trout will many times pass up a Brown Drake or even a Hex imitation to key on the spinners of the Bat Fly.

My Little Fat Bastard spinner imitation and a Parachute Bat Fly pattern found in Ann's book, *Hatch Guide to the Upper Midwest*, have proven effective in solving this riddle.

Some of my fishing buddies have bemoaned that they've never experienced the Hex hatch because of its unpredictability and often short duration because of changing weather patterns. However, this year's warm temperatures in early and mid-summer provided the perfect formula for Hex fishing. Especially because on several evenings temperatures remained warm and balmy even through the late night hours, perfect Hex weather existed. My buddies only had themselves to blame for missing the Hexes this year.

I found myself fishing the Au Sable in the big water near McMaster's Bridge on several nights and was rewarded with a couple 20 inchers. Hex hatches were prolific and moved through the entire Au Sable and Manistee systems rather deliberately, allowing for an extended opportunity to tie into some really big fish.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Larry Butts



Trout Unlimited is first and foremost a conservation organization dedicated to conserve, protect, and restore Michigan's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. But the dirty little secret is that a very large percentage of our members also love to fish.

Wading a picturesque river or flowing with the current in a drift boat, we truly enjoy our rivers, lakes, and streams. Our love of the outdoors leads us to participate in these conservation efforts.

TU came into being when a group of like-minded men decided that something had to be done to restore rivers that had been damaged by logging, and to restore our fisheries. They saw the need and did something about it.

The Vanguard Chapter, along with the other 19 chapters in Michigan, have collectively done much to conserve and protect, and continue with their work projects every year. The problem is that we are facing not one, but two new invasive species in our waters and it has largely gone unnoticed.

You may have read about the New Zealand Mud Snail and "Rock Snot," or Didymos. Due to their size, the

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The most frustrating part was not finding Hexes. The frustrating part was working hard to fool some really monster trout but then not being able to control them in total darkness when lucky enough to hook them. At least one fish that I swear was in the 25+ range took me across the river and then downstream into my backing before pulling free because of all the fly line working against me in the current. But that's a problem any fisherman would like to have.

If the trend continues, and there is no reason to believe it won't, Tricos should be showing up within the next couple weeks in their favorite haunts. Hoppers, ants, and other terrestrial patterns are usually pretty successful for midday fishing after the Fourth of July. This year should be no exception.

Enjoy the fishing this summer. There is no predicting what next year may bring.

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microscopic mud snails are easily overlooked, but their impact on the fish in the infected areas is huge.

As has been mentioned in past articles this year, it is vitally important to educate our members and other groups that use our rivers, to wash their boots, shoes, waders, and boats after each trip. Doing so will prevent the spread of these organisms.

You can also share this information with others you see on the water. Canoes, boats, and inner tubes are used most every day in the summer and these folks are generally unaware of the situation. A friendly conversation can help more than you might realize, and maybe even get a new member for TU.

TYING FLIES THAT CATCH FISH

By Jeff Gerwitz

Our theme this year at our monthly fly tying sessions is to tie flies that are simple and that catch fish. The following is what we tied in April and June.

The fly for April's tying session was the Shop Vac.



Tim Flagler of Tightline Productions says that he read somewhere that the Shop Vac was the creation of famed West Yellowstone fly shop owner Craig Mathews. That attribution is very common, but it's not entirely accurate. In fact, the Shop Vac was first tied by Rowan Nyman, one of Mathews' partners at Blue Ribbon Flies. Either way, the Shop Vac is a great searching pattern that imitates any number of emerging aquatic insects. Use it as a dropper below a hopper or other dry fly, or try drifting it close to the bottom. It even produces on stillwaters, fished buzzer-style on a drift, or with short strips. I did well with this fly on the Madison River last summer and I don't see why it won't work on Paint Creek.

The recipe for this fly is:

Hook: Scud/pupa hook, sizes 16-20.
 Bead: Gold, 3/32-inch.
 Thread: Black, 8/0 or 70-denier.
 Rib: Copper Ultra Wire, small.
 Body: 6 to 8 pheasant-tail fibers.
 Wingbud: White Z-lon or polypro.

For a great tying video, go to Tightline Productions at:

<http://midcurrent.com/videos/how-to-tie-the-shop-vac/>

The fly for June's fly tying session was the Biot Body dry fly. This rusty spinner uses goose biot for the body in lieu of dubbing and wire. Biot is a specialized feather barb found on the leading edge of flight feathers on the wing of a bird. Turkey and goose biots are commonly used since they are long enough to handle during tying. Depending on the way that the biot is mounted and wrapped on the hook, the resulting body will be either fringed, as shown here, or smooth. The fringed method imitates the segmented body of a typical mayfly. This method can be used to tie almost any kind of mayfly dry. The size of the typical goose biot limits you to size 14, 16, and 18. The turkey biot is longer and can be used for larger flies.



The recipe for this fly is:

Hook: dry fly hook, sizes 18-14.
 Thread: Rust, 8/0, 14/0, 16/0.
 Tail: Microfibrils, light color.
 Body: goose or turkey biot – rusty spinner.
 Wing: EP fibers (Spinner Wing color), poly or CDC.
 Thorax (if desired): rusty dubbing

If you have not been to one of our fly tying sessions yet, they are held on the third Thursday of each month at Avery's Tavern at 7:30 p.m. Stop by and tie or just talk fishing, and enjoy a cold beer.