Chapter Motto: “Get Hooked! Go Fishing!”

CALENDAR

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Winter is fully upon us and, if you are anything like me, you are likely thinking about refurbishing worn gear, pending steelhead runs, and the adventures that the next year will send our way. The Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited is also focusing on a number of activities to advance the conservation of cold-water fisheries in the UP, to enhance angling opportunities for all sorts of people, and to bring more members into the TU family.

As I briefly noted in our last Newsletter, your local TU Chapter has formed a partnership with the Escanaba River Association to start improving the fishery of the cold-water tributaries above Boney Falls. As reported in an accompanying article, we hope to enlarge this partnership in the months ahead. In particular, an integral part of this initiative involves encouraging people like YOU to help us learn about the Upper Escanaba Watershed—which resources need special attention or where our conservation efforts will do the most good—as, together, we promote “citizen science” in our region. If you have an interest in working with our partnership, or if you know of others who would be keen on the idea, please drop us a line!

In concert with major initiatives such as the Escanaba River Watershed partnership, the Fred Waara chapter continues to work on other projects discussed in the following pages, such as the Salmon in the Classroom initiative. Your Board of Directors has also decided to build upon last year’s efforts to assist disabled veterans by way of Project Healing Waters to also offer workshops to those affected by breast cancer under the aegis of the Casting for Recovery program. Stay tuned for more information on these events in the next newsletter. And, of course, we are gearing-up for our Annual Banquet to be held in the Great Lakes Rooms of the NMU University Center on Friday, April 15th. I think you’ll be pleased by the changes we are making to improve the games & auctions. Plan to be there to bid on exciting premiums such as a fishing kayak and an angling expedition into the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming at the end of July! And, remember: All of the activities sponsored or services we provide to the local community would not be possible without the generous support from you, our members, and the local businesses that contribute to our annual fund raiser. So, please, mark the date and invite anyone you know who believes in the TU mission join us for an evening of food and fun.

Jim Cantrill
MONTHLY MEETINGS
are held the first Wednesday of the month
6:30pm at the LandMark Inn
230 N. Front Street, Marquette

SIC is a Big Hit! Salmon in the Classroom (SIC) is in full production for the 2010-11 school year. The salmon eggs arrived Thanksgiving week and within 3 weeks were hatched. The students and teachers were enthused and excited as they care for their charges. The students handle all aspects of care for the fish and learn about their natural habitat, life cycle, feeding habits, etc. The fish will grow to about 3-4 inches in size when they will be released by the kids into local streams, sometime in May. Our special thanks goes to Scot Stewart for the great pictures.

NEW MEMBERS
Gregg Anderson of Ishpeming
Jeremy Caruso of Iron Mountain
David Denise of Marquette
John Erdody of Gladstone
Mike Hebein of Ishpeming
Cassidy Hollon of Menominee
Laura Pernice of Marquette
Al Reich of Rumely
James Saari of Negaunee

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FWCTU eNewsletter NOW AVAILABLE
FWCTU is now offering the Chapter Newsletter in an eNewsletter format. It is posted on the www.MichiganTU.org website under the Fred Waara Chapter. Just click on “Visit their webpage.” In an effort to reduce our newsletter production costs we now offer the option of receiving the eNewsletter only rather than the printed newsletter sent in the mail. Here’s how it works. As soon as the Newsletter is ready, it will be posted on the above web site and a TU email will be sent to all members maintaining an email address on the national TU database alerting them that it is available. We also know that many, many members enjoy the paper copy of the Newsletter and we have no plans to discontinue our regular mailing. This option of receiving the eNewsletter via the web site is just that, an option. If you wish to receive the email notice and not receive a printed copy, please send an email to Bob Jensen at pbjup@hotmail.com and mail delivery will be stopped. If you change your mind and wish to resume receiving the paper copy, just let us know and we’ll do that as well.

TROUT UNLIMITED
Fred Waara Chapter
24th ANNUAL BANQUET
April 15, 2011
NMU’s Great Lakes Room

GREAT TRIPS!!! EXCELLENT PRIZES!!! GREAT TRIPS!!!
FUN NEW GAMES!!! COME FOR A SUPER TIME!!

SIC is a Big Hit! Salmon in the Classroom (SIC) is in full production for the 2010-11 school year. The salmon eggs arrived Thanksgiving week and within 3 weeks were hatched. The students and teachers were enthused and excited as they care for their charges. The students handle all aspects of care for the fish and learn about their natural habitat, life cycle, feeding habits, etc. The fish will grow to about 3-4 inches in size when they will be released by the kids into local streams, sometime in May. Our special thanks goes to Scot Stewart for the great pictures.
The Escanaba River above Boney Falls is well-known in the central UP for the range of sporting activities it offers to boaters, hunters and anglers. Indeed, the watershed sees many a fly rod cast across its currents in summer as people of all ages seek trout that lurk below the surface. Yet, on October 9, 2010, something like a reversal of fortune took place south of Gwinn as two brigades of dedicated fishermen, notably private citizens rather than MDNRE contractors, released roughly 1500 brown trout (between 9 to 14 inches) at various locations on the main stem of the river. Hmmmmm? The trout season was over and these guys seemed more excited about the trout scurrying and leaping away from them than trying to entice prey into a net. What was going on??

The 2010 fall trout release was the initial “handshake” event solidifying a newly formed partnership between the Escanaba River Association (ERA) and the Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited. For years, the two organizations had shared members and attended one another’s events, recognizing that their missions were compatible-yet-different. Whereas TU focuses on the conservation of cold-water fisheries that may enhance fishing opportunities, the ERA has been primarily concerned with enhancing the trout populations adjacent to their lodge on the Lower Escanaba River. In the past couple of years, however, members of the ERA leadership team began setting their sights on a larger goal: The conservation and recreational improvement of the cold-water and transitional reaches of the river above Boney Falls as well as the warmer waters below the dam. Thus, the Escanaba River Association reached out to the Fred Waara Chapter and, in short order, the two organizations formed the Escanaba River Watershed Partnership, or ERWP.

Simply put, the mission of the ERWP is:

To enhance the cold-water fishery in the Escanaba River watershed, with a primary focus on its major tributaries.

The realization of this mission will involve a multi-year project that brings together a wide array of public and private sector partners with the primary goal of promoting the use of public science in the management and enhancement of the upper Escanaba River. For us, the term “public science” means a collaboration between natural resource agencies, local schools and universities, private industry, community organizations, and individuals living in the watershed in order to design and carry out
WHAT A DAY ON THE BIG "TWO HEARTED"

Any day on the river is a great day, but one Thursday last September was extra special. I was the high bidder for a day's fly fishing outing donated by Brad Petzke at last year's Annual Banquet. I invited my brother Brian to join us. Brad suggested that we fish the Two Hearted River. On Tuesday he called to suggest that we switch to the Escanaba as the Two Hearted had not been fishing well at all. My brother had already left Traverse City to visit friends in the UP and was not reachable to change plans, so we stuck with the Two Hearted and I told Brad we were willing to take our chances. Neither Brian nor I had ever fished the Two Hearted as renowned as it is, so just being on the water would be experience enough.

Brian & I met at the mouth on Wednesday evening in time to fish in the surf for a couple of hours, each catching one relatively small coho, one in the surf and one in losing a couple of Rainbow Lodge, ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan- ramshackle lodge/ livery run by a ple. Totally off photovoltaic pan-rocks to Rises Winter 2011

conservation research and habitat improvement. We believe this ap-
roach is best suited for the rural character of the EWRP project area in that it has the ability to leverage the financial and intellectual resources of many stakeholders in the region while, at the same time, giving voice to those who know the river the best …..the citizens who live aside, work among, and draw upon the waters for their enjoyment and livelihoods. As founding partners, the Escanaba River Association and the Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited have committed themselves to creating as inclusive a process as we can to learn about and help further conserve the cold-water fisheries of the river. To achieve our goal, the ERWP has begun the process of adaptive management efforts directed at assessing and improving trout populations in both the major tributaries of the watershed as well as the main-stem of the Escanaba River above Boney Falls Reservoir. The idea here is to and use it as a basis for im-

er's mouth and others. We stayed at the which is a trip in itself: a motel/campground/canoe very "unique" cou-

ommunicative habitat & a very tank. Rooms have outlets & gas basic but clean & comfortable. You may want to visit their web page.

It poured a rain of "biblical proportions" on Wednesday night and by 5am I was convinced that we would not be able to float the river as planned. Luckily the storm ended around six. We met Brad at 8am after a cold breakfast, and were on the river by 9am; water was still clear but rising and turned dirtier as the day went on from the rain.

Brad uses a very comfortable float boat, made in Michigan from his design. The favored position is the caster in the bow with braces & the second caster is aft. The first 45 minutes were uneventful. We were casting 8 wt rods with steelhead streamers. I started in the bow and after 45 minutes of no action Brad changed the streamer. Within minutes I had hooked & landed a 20-22 inch beautiful coho. For the next 5 hours we averaged 2 fish/hour, alternating between Brian & me mostly caught from the bow position, but several also from aft. At the end of the day, we each had hooked 5 fish & we landed 8 of the 10. All on streamers. None of that "chuck and duck" s**t but real live & exciting fly fishing. My best day fishing for large fish ever.

Lessons learned: • Bid high for Brad's donated float trip • Being at the right time & place is the key to good fishing • Fish as much & as often as you can. You'll just have to fish with Brad to learn his secrets!!

Submitted by Jerry Maynard
landowner survey to get some data by way of waders-in-the-water. Nonetheless, we suspect that natural reproduction of brook trout in those target streams is meager at present and, if so, we want to know why. 

**Stage II – Habitat Improvement.** Based upon the data we collect and information we gather from those who work and play along-side the Big West Branch, our strategy calls for identifying areas that pose the greatest risk to the system and those sections that promise the greatest dividends from riparian and streambed investments. At this time, we anticipate naturally occurring sedimentation and vegetation encroachment pose the greatest impairments to the tributaries but it may also be the case that significant land development changes could contribute to warming of the waters. In any event, the ERWP wants to determine where and how to get the biggest, long-term bang-for-the-buck when stabilizing water courses, rehabilitating riparian areas, or increasing spawning bed productivity. Such efforts to increase recruitment of trout into the system may draw upon resources ranging from the Michigan National Guard to youth-based groups such as the Boy Scouts of America and will be based upon rehabilitation protocols the Fred Waara Chapter successfully tested on Connor’s Creek in the past. As we work to mitigate threats and enhance the cold-water fishery in the Big West Branch, we will continue to monitor conditions and use that research to adapt our efforts to on the water conditions.

**Stage III – Trout Population Enhancements.** Once we are reasonably certain that the Big West Branch can sustain increased, naturally reproducing brook trout, we want to begin an innovative stocking program designed to develop a robust brood-stock population. We are convinced that traditional approaches to fish stocking, wherein huge quantities of small fish are pumped into small stretches of stream, are often off-set by easy predation and stress-induced mortality for hatchery raised trout. In contrast, the ERWP intends to pursue a stocking strategy similar to what we employed last fall on the main river: use of provincially compatible and reasonably mature hatchery fish, released by bucket in a widely dispersed and low-density manner when and where water temperatures are cool enough to avoid undue shock or lethargy, and in locations that provide sufficient cover and depth to survive the coming winter. Along the way, we intend to tag a sample of fish so as to monitor survival, growth, and sustainable recruitment; if we can secure the funding, genetic markers could be identified and tracked through subsequent spawning seasons.

**Stage IV – Reassessment & Relocation.** Within five years, we believe our efforts on the Big West Branch of the Escanaba River will bear enough fruit to warrant a comprehensive reassessment of the project. Feedback from all the public and private partners we have attracted along the way, the monitoring data we have gathered, and what both our eyes and rod tips tell us should be sufficient to suggest ways to improve the protocol for that tributary and to consider adapting it to another branch of the river. Thus, as with most adaptive management processes that rely upon public science, we think our humble experiment in the service of conservation and recreation may lead us to, say, even bigger fish. Of course, an initiative of this size and scope will not be possible without assistance from quarters. Consequently, the ERWP is now in the process of building its capacity by attracting more partners such as other TU chapters or corporate stakeholders in the area such as timber and power companies that can lend expertise and financial support. We also want to gradually educate the wider public as to our goals and objectives, enfranchising a larger audience in a public process that values stakeholders’ knowledge and that can be improved through the use of fisheries science and practice.

Yet, with all of our focus on the Big West Branch in the coming years, what of the trunk of the Escanaba River and the angling resource it provides? What of those big browns—selected precisely because the water is warmer in the main stem—we planted in the fall? We expect they will be there next summer when we go looking for them with rod in hand (keeping an eye on the colder nurseries upstream) or next fall when we may return to set loose another bucket or two.

Feel free to join us in what promises to be a fun multi-year project!

Submitted by Jim Cantrill