

ALDER FORK JOURNAL

Newsletter of the Aldo Leopold Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Serving Columbia, Dodge and Sauk Counties since 1982



SPRING 2018

CURRENT THREADS

By Mike Stapleton

President, Aldo Leopold Chapter

Despite the fact that we can actually go trout fishing now, the dead of winter for me has never been a time when I yearned to be streamside. Back in the 70's, the "old days" when we had an early season in January, I fished only twice when the ground was snow covered, had one small trout to show for my efforts, and pretty much felt that I would prefer to stay inside and tie a few flies until things warmed up a bit. Like until March, maybe.

While I continue to sit on the fence deliberating whether or not any of the warm(er) spells we experience is enough to draw me out to throw a few casts, I hope that those of you with no such reservations are taking advantage of your opportunities and reaping some rewards for doing so. I'll get out there myself eventually.

I think most or all of you by now are aware that we have more to concern ourselves

with this year other than our pursuit of the trout. I refer, of course, to the recent news that New Zealand Mudsnails have been discovered in Rowan Creek. Not good news; many of our chapter members fish Rowan; at 10 miles away it's practically in my backyard and if I have a home stream, that's it.

Since at this time there is no known effective way to eradicate them, short of wiping out everything else in the stream, monitoring the snail population and any observable impacts on other stream life is about all that can be done for Rowan Creek for now. So they're not going away, and only time will tell just what the impacts will be.

Invasive species advisory signs such as the one shown here were posted on all DNR-controlled public access points on Rowan Creek on Friday, January 5th, the day before the early trout season opened.



With the recent confirmation of New Zealand Mudsnails in Rowan Creek, signs have been placed at DNR public access points along the creek.

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IMPORTANT CHAPTER DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, April 11, ALCTU Chapter Meeting and Board Elections, 5:30 p.m. Suzy's Steak House, Portage, WI. All ALCTU members are invited. Please e-mail Mike Stapleton if you plan to attend @ mikestapleton22@gmail.com

Tuesday, June 12, ALCTU's Annual Fund Raiser and Picnic. Haberman Park, Lodi. If you have an item you would like to donate to the raffles, please e-mail Mike Stapleton @ mikestapleton22@gmail.com

OFFICERS AND BOARD DIRECTORY

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The ALCTU board members would like to thank Budget Print of Watertown for all of the assistance they provide with printing and mailing of our newsletters. Please consider them for your printing needs.

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With mudsnails having been discovered in Dane County's Black Earth Creek about three years ago, TU members should already be aware of this threat and of the need for regular cleaning of our wading gear. Hopefully you have already been cleaning your gear according to recommended practices. If not, start now.

The Department of Natural Resources has information on their website, www.dnr.wi.gov that can be accessed by searching under New Zealand Mudsnails, where you will find information on Prevention and Treatment Methods. Please read all of this material, acquire the necessary equipment, and clean your wading gear each and every time you fish, as well as between streams if you fish more than one in a given day, as many anglers do.

These invaders may already be present in other Wisconsin waters where they have not yet been detected. We cannot assume any water body is mudsnail-free, and we cannot take the chance that our failure to clean our gear will be the means of transporting them to more and more currently uninfested waters.

Clean your boots when you go, but do go. Maybe when the weather suits me a bit more I will see you out there. And it might be March when you read this, so I guess I'd better go check over my gear.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of March 1, 2018

Funds for stream projects	\$5,044.69
Funds for chapter operations	\$4,471.40
Total	\$9,516.09

Michael C. Stupich, Treasurer

ALCTU FLY TYING CLASS

Our Beginner Fly Tying Class kicked off on Wednesday, January 31 at the Baraboo Public Library. Jake Prinsen, staff reporter for the Baraboo News Republic, joined us that evening to shoot some photos, talk to students and instructors, and wrote a wonderful article that appeared as the top story in the Feb. 1 edition of the BNR. Although attendance was down a bit, the enthusiasm level was not, and all tiers, including several youngsters, have been producing flies that they could be proud of. By the time we completed our fifth session on Feb. 28, our tiers had assembled a collection of great trout and panfish flies, and the weather is even improving a bit, so the fish better watch out!



(t) Instructor Mike Stapleton walks through a step-by-step. (bl) Steve Hangar takes some wraps with the bobbin. (br) Trevor Ruff guides son, Kalen.

WITU FISHING CAMP

The WITU Youth Fishing Camp will be marking its fifth year in 2018, with the camp being held once again at the Pine Lake Bible Camp in Wild Rose. The camp will be held July 19-22, and ALCTU is hoping to sponsor a young person between the ages of 12 and 16 to this wonderful event. If you know of a potential camper, contact Mike Stapleton, mikestapleton22@gmail.com.

TIC VISITS NEVIN HATCHERY

In late February, two 5th grade classes participating in Trout in the Classroom visited Nevin Fish Hatchery near Madison, chapter Vice President Scott Allen accompanied the 40 students. Two weeks earlier the classrooms received 40 rainbow trout fry for the cold water aquarium provided by TU. The fry will grow to be fingerlings or larger before being released by the kids, as part of a field trip with a DNR electroshocking demonstration in late May at Dell Creek, Sauk County.

At Nevin Hatchery the kids were able to see the stages of growth, from egg to adult broodstock in their respective tanks and raceways. The students learned about stripping eggs from wild strain broodstock, incubation, feeding requirements, and lastly transportation from hatchery to trout stream.



ALDO LEOPOLD CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT
The Aldo Leopold Chapter's mission is to conserve, protect, restore and enhance trout and salmonid fisheries, watersheds, the groundwater that sustains them, and the doctrine of public trust that defends them, in Columbia, Dodge and Sauk Counties. We do this through education, cooperation, rehabilitation and advocacy using an extensive and dedicated volunteer network.



THOUGHTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LIGHT By Tom Gawle

In 2013 ALCTU began a 5-year-long, post-restoration water-quality study on Bear Creek. We have gathered and reported level-one WAV (Water Action Volunteer) data each year during the months of May through October, and using submerged temperature loggers, we gather water temperature data in the creek in seven locations every 1/2-hour, around the clock, also for those six months. Put 'em in and walk away for 1/2 a year.

In late October or early November each year, the loggers are “re-found” in the creek and removed from where they were installed in May. We have been very fortunate to re-find each one every year, so far. Twice, one of the loggers moved from the spot it was installed (likely flood waters or cattle the cause) but with the help of strong daylight, clear water and the fact that the loggers are strapped to metal fence posts anchored in the stream bed, the broken posts and its passenger did not travel far downstream.

At each streamside site, the 6-months of temperature data stored in each logger is immediately downloaded to a hand-held digital shuttle. No matter how many times I have downloaded the data, standing in the creek, hoping and trusting the loggers did their job, I always breathe a sigh of relief when the OK light on the shuttle shines brightly.

<http://aldoleopold.tu.org/>