

ALDER FORK JOURNAL



Newsletter of the Aldo Leopold Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Serving Columbia, Dodge and Sauk Counties since 1982

AUTUMN 2015

IN THE LOOP

By Scott Allen

President, Aldo Leopold Chapter



Every great journey is made of many small steps.

As a small chapter of 145 members, we have learned we can accomplish big things when we approach a seemingly mountainous task one step at a time. Our journey of transforming Bear Creek in Sauk County from a degraded silt-laden creek to four and one half miles of prime aquatic and riparian habitat was anything but a leap and a jump, but rather many small steps taken by many devoted individuals.

Six years ago, Eric Lorenzen, Mike Barniskis, Steve Hill and other chapter members answered the call of retired farmer, William Fargen Sr. to resuscitate his ailing Bear Creek. Gathered at a conference table in Beaver Dam, the Bear Creek Habitat Improvement Project was formed to develop a plan, a route of sorts, to conquer this mountainous task. No one at that meeting had ever embarked on such a journey but they knew it could only be done one step at a time. We have since devoted hundreds of volunteer hours to meetings, LUNKER building, fund raising, monitoring, tours and public outreach. The importance of dues-paying members who may not have had the opportunity to break a sweat or sit through meetings cannot be overlooked, your membership contributions return in the form of national and regional support and grants by Trout Unlimited.

Now here we are, all of us together as a chapter, within site of the summit. Four and one half miles of clean, cold water, it is the longest contiguous trout habitat improvement in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin. The final lengths of stream bank restoration have been completed and at this writing we are waiting for cold weather in order to complete the bank seeding. Native adult Brook Trout are now returning to and Browns are reproducing in, as if on cue, the main channel of Bear Creek. Bear Creek has not been stocked with Brook Trout and no one knows for certain when they were last seen there, but they have returned. That's our flag on the summit ... now, on to the next mountain.

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Help Wanted — The Aldo Leopold Chapter has several volunteer leadership opportunities for its members. Each of the following positions requires only a few hours a month. In the past, these responsibilities have been handled by board members but as the chapter continues to grow there is now a need for dedicated individuals. Please consider one or more of these and contact Scott Allen at jscottallen12@gmail.com or 608-495-1482.

Web Site and Facebook Administrator — Maintain the web site calendar, pictures and content, same for Facebook. This does not require any programming or code skills. Most of the work is from your computer, members will e-mail you content. One hour per week, attend one board meeting per year if needed.

2016 Fund-raising Picnic Committee Members — We need assistance with the annual fund-raiser picnic in Lodi, June 15, 2016. Help with planning and preparing food, raffle donations, public relations, arranging a guest speaker etc. Attend the April board meeting to help with the planning and lend a hand on the day of the picnic.

Membership Director — Maintain the e-mail and address lists for the chapter. You will have access to the TU National database from which you will keep the chapter roster current as well as a list of recently lapsed memberships. All of the work is from your home computer, attend one board meeting per year or as needed. This position requires only a few hours per month.

Education and Public Outreach Coordinator — Oversee the implementation and organization of classes and outreach for non-members. ALCTU offers a five week fly-tying class each year in the chapter region. In 2016, we are installing *Trout In The Classroom* in a school in Reedsburg and offering a fly-casting clinic in Baraboo. The coordinator will oversee the planning of these types of programs with assistance from other members. Averages four hours per month.

DO WE KNOW YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS ?
We (and you) depend on e-mail to keep you informed.
Contact TROUT@TU.org with any contact information changes

2016 Fly Tying Classes in Baraboo — This winter, the increasingly popular fly-tying classes are returning to the Baraboo Public Library. Although the classes are structured for the beginner those familiar with tying are welcome to attend. The 2016 dates are Wednesdays January 27th, February 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, and March 2nd as a snow day make up. Six p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Please contact Mike Stapleton at mikestapelton22@gmail.com, 608-742-3665 for additional information.

State Council Awards and Fund Raising Banquet tickets are available — The 2016 Wisconsin TU State Council Awards Banquet and raffle/auction will be held at the Best Western Hotel, Oshkosh on Saturday, February 6th. Tickets are \$35.00 and

**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.

THE FINAL CHAPTER?

by Todd Franklin

The Aldo Leopold Chapter is Mike Stapleton's fourth, and we are lucky to have him. After a lifetime of volunteering and serving as a leader for several Wisconsin chapters, Aldo Leopold Chapter Vice President, Mike Stapleton hopes to finish out his "TU career" with us. Not only has he proven himself as a diehard workday volunteer, a committed board member and now our vice president, he has also organized our popular fly-tying classes in recent years.



It's no surprise how well he's done running our tying classes, considering that he organized the Central Wisconsin Chapter's annual fly-fishing school when he was a member in that chapter. He also served as a board member and chapter president for the Central Chapter several decades ago, so the Aldo Chapter also gains a very experienced leader in that regard.

Familiar path to TU Like most TU members, it was a passion for fishing that opened his eyes to the good work and good will of TU. Born in 1951 and growing up in Milwaukee and Menomonee Falls, his early years were spent chasing blue gill, bass and northerns, especially at his grandparents' lake cottage in West Bend. "My interest in trout came solely from reading

about it in Sports Afield and Outdoor Life, and my first trout experience was on the Mecan River while in high school," he explained.

"An older brother had acquired fly fishing gear, and I eventually took it over and managed to catch blue gills and a few bass on flies, but trout fishing was strictly worm dunking. I picked up a tying kit in college, but I didn't make the break from bait until my late twenties."

In 1976 Mike joined TU's Milwaukee Chapter, now called the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter. "I think somehow I got a hold of a TU brochure, knew it was the right thing to do, and mailed it in," he recalls. But his membership there was short lived, as he moved to the Spooner area, joining the local chapter there.

By 1979 he moved to Montello and his TU efforts skyrocketed at the Central Wisconsin Chapter, where he quickly went from active member to a solid leader.

The final transition...to the Aldo Chapter In 1992 Mike moved to his current address south of Portage. But his career got busier, a family happened, and although he maintained ties with CWTU, his involvement dropped and he gave up his board position.

Fast forward a few years, and Mike noticed that the Aldo Leopold Chapter was holding workdays on Rocky Run, just a few miles from his home. So he started attending Aldo workdays. "I transferred membership about two years later, partly out of guilt for walking away from the Aldo picnic that year with the Van Ness fly rod clutched tightly in my hand, and also because I knew there were board openings that needed filling," he explains. "It also helped that board meetings were held at the Corner Pocket in Portage. This is my fourth chapter, and I hope it's my last."

Mike is enjoying the camaraderie of the Aldo Chapter's active members and leaders, although he believes

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of November 15, 2015

Checking	\$4,315.00
Savings	\$1,185.15
Total	\$5,500.15

Michael C. Stupich, Treasurer



IMPORTANT CHAPTER DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, January 13, 2016, ALCTU Chapter Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Suzy's Steak House, Portage, WI.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016, 5 week fly-tying classes begin, 6:00 p.m. Baraboo Public Library, Baraboo, WI.

Saturday, February 6, 2016, TU State Council Banquet, Best Western Hotel, Oshkosh, WI.

Wednesday, March 9, 2016, Orvis Fly Fishing 101, 5:30 p.m. Baraboo Civic Center gym.

Saturdays, April 16, May 21, June 19, 2016, ALCTU Work Days, times and locations to come.

Wednesday, Mid-June, 2016, Annual Fund-raising Picnic, 5:00 p.m. Habermann Park, Lodi, WI.

OFFICERS AND BOARD DIRECTORY

Chapter Mailing Address:

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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.

the number of active members could be higher, given the membership size of our chapter, he says. "Our efforts to schedule more general membership activities is something we must continue, although I was a bit disappointed at the member turnouts we had in Portage. We have to keep plugging away at this, and 2015 was a good start," he added.

As the educational component of TU has grown tremendously in recent years, Mike is pleased with the things our chapter has done in that regard. "But we need more involved members to cover the bases, otherwise the small group of active members can get burned out."

A knack for legislative activities In more recent years, Mike has added the unofficial title of legislative specialist to his TU resume, first volunteering as CWTU's legislative specialist and now serving the same role for the Aldo Leopold Chapter as well as the State Council. After working for 32 years as a zoning administrator for Marquette and Columbia Counties, Mike learned some of the ins and outs of the legislative process. About seven years ago he realized his experience could be put to use in TU.

"I noticed in my work that many other persons in similar positions in other counties had very little time to track and respond to important legislative issues related to our work and responsibilities," he explains. "The same holds true with TU, as most of us depend on a small group of people to inform us and, too often, to respond for us as well. I also learned along the way how often legislative decisions were made with minimal outside input."

Mike realizes that TU does very well in getting its membership to respond as individuals, rather than just having a small number of people advocating for their respective chapter, council or National TU. E-mail is a difference maker these days, of course, and getting the message out to the members has paid off. State legislators know who we are and that our members are knowledgeable about issues, he says.

Less work, more fishing Before retiring in 2011, there were years when Mike was simply too busy to spend much time pursuing his trout-fishing passion. He recalls one year when he fished only twice, catching one small brookie the entire season. But those days are now just a memory, and, he says, "I am doing my best to make up for years like that."



available from Scott Allen in advance or you can purchase a ticket at the door. If you love “all-things-fly fishing” and libations, this event will certainly thaw your pocket book. ALCTU will be donating a new inflatable pontoon drift boat and couple bottles of top-shelf spirits produced right here in our home counties.

It is the tradition of these annual banquets that each TU chapter make a contribution to the fund-raising effort of this event. ALCTU donates an item or items (\$400 to \$600 value) to be used for raffle prizes or in auctions, each year. Often a board member will graciously donate the item and sometimes, it is a combination of board members and the chapter that fund the item. Once in a while the chapter will completely fund it. In any case, the chapter will very willingly accept any and all amounts of member donations toward this annual operating cost. If you are so inclined to donate a small or not-so-small monetary amount, please send it to our chapter Treasurer, Mike Stupich, 615 E. Main Street, Watertown, WI 53094.

I hope to see you at the banquet, on the evening of Saturday, February 6th. If you purchase your ticket before December 31st, 2015 and you will receive 10 FREE raffle tickets! For tickets contact Scott at jscottallen12@gmail.com or 608-495-1482.

Orvis Fly Fishing 101 In Baraboo, March 9th — Orvis of Middleton in conjunction with Aldo Leopold Chapter will host *Fly Fishing 101: Introduction to the Fly Rod and Casting*. Held indoors at the Baraboo Civic Center gym, Tristin Kloss of Orvis will be the instructor, rods and tackle will be supplied and members of ALCTU will be on hand to assist. Kids accompanied by an adult are welcome to attend. This class is free and limited to 15 students. To register please contact Scott Allen at jscottallen12@gmail.com or 608-495-1482.

Help Conserve Clean Cold Water — Consider donating to the 2016 ALCTU fund-raising picnic in Lodi. Our operating budget (100% goes to conservation expenses) is generated entirely from the annual fund-raiser letter and picnic held in Lodi. The raffles and silent auctions are comprised entirely of donated items from members and businesses. Do you have any hunting, fishing, camping items in “near new” condition that are gathering dust? How about that chain saw you got on Father’s Day ... three years ago that is still in the box? Please consider donating your unused items, of course modest monetary donations are welcome too. Contact any one of our board members and tell us what you have or would like to donate.

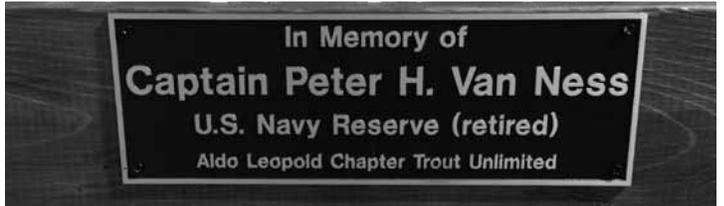
2016 ALCTU Chapter Outing and Work Day at Tainter Creek June 19th — Join TU members from across the state for a day of work, barbecue and fishing. ALCTU will return to Tainter Creek in Vernon County to clear brush and remove beaver dams. This will be a combined effort with the Southeast Wisconsin Chapter and Coulee Region Chapter.

The work we did last year showed remarkable results, beaver moved out and brook trout moved in. So, we will continue the effort on this large piece of DNR property. After the work is done SEWTU will host for all, a brat wurst barbecue. Then, in the afternoon, we will disperse to fishing destinations. If this will be your first year and you’d like to fish please let us know, we will pair you with a host to show you some great fishing in the area. WAIT! NOT SO FAST! The fun is not over! We have reserved a group camp at the West Fork Sportsmen Club in nearby Avalanche for an evening of camp fires, libations, barbecue and entirely-honest fishing stories. You are welcome to camp or just join the fun for the evening. Contact Scott Allen at jscottallen12@gmail.com or 608-495-1482.





Last July 29th and 30th, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources shocked an extensive stretch of the restored section of Bear Creek. During the two day sampling it was not uncommon to bring up Brook Trout. This is in contrast to the shocking done in 2010, prior to any restoration, which tallied only one.



A memorial bench has been installed at Veterans' Park in Lodi, Wisconsin remembering ALCTU chapter member, Peter Van Ness.

— IMPORTANT NOTICE —

At the July 2015 board of directors meeting held in Portage, a vote passed unanimously to have regular chapter meetings, to be held quarterly on the second Wednesday of January, April, July, and October of each year. The chapter newsletter will follow each meeting about two weeks later. All chapter members are invited to attend these meetings. Details will appear in the "Important Dates" section.

WINTER FLY TYING CLASS IS FAST APPROACHING

By Mike Stapleton

What's a trout angler to do? The season is closed, the gear has been stored away for the winter (or should have been by now), you have leaves to pick up, and snow is just around the corner. The answer, of course, is not to wistfully dream of the trout season gone by, but to make plans for the season to come. And the best way for some of you to do that is to sign up for the FREE ALCTU 2016 Beginner Fly Tying Class.



The 2016 class will be held at the Baraboo Public Library, Wednesday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00, with five weekly classes beginning on January 27th and ending on February 24th. This class is ideal for the beginning tier, those who have tied before but need help to shake off the rust and get going again, and sometimes for those who have taken the class before but feel that they still can benefit from additional instruction. And, if you have a child who is ready to start tying, our class is the perfect place to do that (children must be accompanied by an adult).

ALCTU provides materials; students should bring a fly tying vice, black thread, and tying tools. For those not having equipment, we have a limited number of tying kits available. We will teach you to tie a number of simple and effective fly patterns that are proven fish catchers for a variety of Wisconsin species.

To sign up or obtain additional information, contact Mike Stapleton by e-mail at mikestapleton22@gmail.com or call 608-742-3665, evenings. If you already tie flies, tell your non-tying friends about this great opportunity. Space is limited, so don't wait too long to sign up!



THANK YOU!

TO ALL OF THE CHAPTER MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO OUR FUND-RAISING DRIVE OR PICNIC EVENT:

Scott Allen, Badger Tenkara, Mike Barniskis, Julian Beld, John Beth, Brandon Meats, Clint Byrnes, Jim Didier, Daniel Endres, Fontana Sports, Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley, Gertrude Gawle, Sally Gawle, Tom Gawle, Peter Grimm, Hayward Fly Fishing Co., Todd Hanson, Tom Hoffman, Tim Hood, Elizabeth Jacobs, Tristan Kloss, Mike Lutes, Paul Maguire, Bruce Marker, Robert Moss, David Murphy, Orvis, James Peters, Steve Roach, Jim and Shirley Schommer, Matt Sment, Mike Stapleton, Mike Stupich, Brenda Van Ness, Kevin Winkers, Mark Winscher, Bob Wyman.

A special "thank you" to all the auction bidders, raffle purchasers, workers, demonstrators, chefs and clean-up crew who made our annual picnic one of the best in our chapter's history!



THE CHINA DUCK

This past October, ALCTU received the Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley Environmental Citizen Award, given to organizations and individuals championing innovative programs or processes that protect the environment. This is the group's 20th anniversary and the award was made up of porcelain (20-year material) and a well-known Lodi mascot, Susy the Duck. Get it?

Wisconsin
Trout Unlimited
Youth Fishing Camp
July 14-17, 2016



WI
TROUT UNLIMITED
YOUTH CAMP

Location: Pine Lake Camp south of Waupaca

For more information, consult
your local Trout Unlimited chapter
or contact:
Linn Beck at 920-216-7408
Wayne Parmley at 920-540-2315

TWO OPENINGS FOR 2016 YOUTH FISHING CAMP

The Aldo Leopold Chapter TU will sponsor two young fishers for the 2016 youth fishing camp. Through our association and partnership with Riverland Conservancy, Sauk County, Linda Lynch, Executive Director has offered to fund one of the youths we send to camp.

Do you have someone, between the age of 12 and 16, in mind for this weekend camp? It will be held July 14-16. All types of fishing techniques (spin, live bait, fly, etc.) will be taught.

For more information about this event, contact any one of the ALCTU board members.

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

ALCTU Newsletter
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