



Blue Lines

Quarterly
Newsletter of
the Upper
Midwest
Council

WINTER

23/24



**FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL**



Photo courtesy Monta Hayner.

INSIDE EDITION:

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Communications Director, Upper Midwest Council

The calendar says December, but....

Thanks for reading the latest news from the Upper Midwest Council of FFi. I welcome contributions to the quarterly newsletter. Let me know what you are doing and thinking about.

Marlene Huston, FFi CI, of the Upper Midwest Council was honored for her demonstrated devotion for increasing the diversity of the FFi community by expanding the involvement of women in fly fishing and FFi. She was awarded the FFi Women's Community Development Award. This award recognizes leadership and service on the regional, national, and/or international level. She volunteers with Casting For Recovery and MN DNR Becoming an Outdoor Woman. She is also one of the organizers of the Women Connect Driftless Rendezvous for the last three years.



Marlene Huston and Mary Ann Dozer fishing the Driftless

**VISIT THE UPPER
MIDWEST COUNCIL @
umcffi.org**

UPPER MIDWEST COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

LYTH'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

Leadership Change Happens in all Organizations: In my last article for the Blue Lines Newsletter, I mentioned that we in the UMC are looking for a new Education Director as we had a leadership change in that position a few years ago. We want to get back to conducting a fly-fishing school in the spring of the year. We are still looking for this position to be filled and we hope to get it filled by the time of the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo which is in March 2024. We want to promote our fly-fishing school at the Expo to recruit students.

All organizations experience leadership changes and the UMC and the FFi are not exceptions to this reality. So, we continue to search for the Education Director and just this week, we heard that Patrick Berry, the CEO of the FFi, will be leaving at the end of the year. So, the FFi is also looking for a new CEO and the FFi Board of Directors are gearing up to develop a transition plan for the organization while searching for the new CEO. Patrick Berry is very willing to help in any way that he can during this transition also. While this might seem daunting, it has happened before and I personally think that the future for the FFi will be strong and bright, despite this leadership change. The FFi is full of good and talented people who love fly fishing and will be willing to promote our sport moving into the future. The change provides an opportunity for others to rise to the occasion and to share their knowledge and skills like others have done in the past.

The Education Director position is a wonderful opportunity for someone to advance the fly-fishing skills of many who want to learn about our sport. They are fun people and the experience of being the Education Director can be a wonderful experience. Please give it some thought and contact me to discuss the position. My e-mail address is: lhartz@comcast.net

In closing I want to wish everyone **Happy Holidays and a prosperous New Year!**

Tight loops, lines, and threads,

Lyth Hartz

President Upper Midwest Council

Lyth Hartz **lhartz@comcast.net**



Upper Midwest Council Casting Director's Report:

Speaking of leadership changes, the FFi Casting program is also going through a transition. The Casting Board of Governors has been eliminated and they have been replaced by FFi Fly Casting Education led by a Leadership Team. The Casting Education Program will focus on two areas: 1) Angler Casting Education and 2) Casting Instructor Education. The program to improve casting skills for anglers is called "Fly Casting Skills Development" (FCSD) and will be incorporated into much of the work of casting instructors in the future. The Casting Instruction Certification program will continue and there are four Certifications available: Certified Casting Instructor; Master Certified Instructor; Two Hand Casting Instructor; and Two Hand Master Casting Instructor. This is a brief outline of the changes, and you can find out more on the FFi website.

www.flyfishersinternational.org

In the future, we hope to provide UMC members with the opportunity to participate in the FCSD program. We hope to have many opportunities for this program offered in our council. Todd Heggstad from our Council is involved in the leadership team for this effort, so I anticipate many opportunities to participate in the FCSD program.

Lyth Hartz

Casting Improvement Tip:

So, now it is beginning to be winter, and we want to find a way to maintain and develop our casting skills through the season. One way to do this is to find an indoor facility that can accommodate indoor casting. High School gymnasiums and Recreation Domes offer such opportunities. These facilities can get busy in the winter months as athletic teams also want to work out and develop their skills. You might find that the only time available is early in the morning at many of these places. You also might find that they will charge a small fee for you to cast in their facility. One of the challenges in casting in these facilities is the lighting may make watching your loops as you cast difficult. That is where I like to use what I call “ground casting” so that you can see the shape of your fly line during the cast. To do ground casting you simply cast horizontally just over the floor of the facility. The line will be much more visible to you, and you will be able to see how your adjustments in your casting stroke affect your loops. This is also a good technique in the summer months as sometimes it is difficult to see your fly line loops in the bright sky.

Keep on casting this winter and maintain your skills, you will be glad you did next Spring or even earlier if you take a winter trip to someplace warm.

Tight loops,

Lyth Hartz,

Casting Director Upper Midwest Council



CONSERVATION REPORT

Chris “Vinny” Vincent

Conservation Director Upper Midwest Council

FFi Board of Directors—Conservation VP

Just when you thought we could take some time to breathe a little after the long contentious battle of the Pebble Mine in Alaska, another threat to the area arrives. Yes, you guessed it, more mining developments that hope to start four open pit mines in the Brooks Range and the Arctic National Park and Preserve. To make matters worse, the four sites are being proposed by foreign companies who will not care about the damage and irreversible effects these pits will create.

Conservation-minded fly fishers and other sports persons have worked for more than 7 decades to conserve and protect the biologically rich landscapes of the Brooks Range and the 8.5 million acre Arctic National Park and Preserve in Alaska. These vast arctic landscapes, their ecological connectivity, and the fish and wildlife they support are once again being threatened. This time a proposal for permit authorization to construct the 211 mile-long Ambler Road into the heart of this unique wilderness.

The purpose of the road is to provide access for foreign-owned mining companies to develop at least four open-pit mines for extraction of minerals to include copper and zinc. The known impacts, as well as those yet to be determined, pose damages to this valuable resource that will never be recovered. Fly Fishers International has joined our many Conservation Partners to work toward prevention of construction of the Ambler Road into this natural treasure.

One way of getting our voices heard individually is by signing a petition to the Bureau of Land Management, urging that they deny any permit. That petition, as well as additional details on the issue, can be found at this site:

<https://huntfishbrooksrangle.com/?ms=ffi#take-action>

We here in Northern Wisconsin and Northern Minnesota are also under threats of open pit mining with a large one on the shores of the Menominee River. The Menominee is a northern border sharing river with a world class smallmouth fishery. The most disturbing part of this mine is the location of the tailing pond less than 150 feet away from the rivers edge. Northern Minnesota narrowly escaped having a large mine near and in “The Boundary Waters”. This was huge victory in the name of conservation.

While mining will always be part of our lives, which is due to our excessive love affair with everything electronic, the mentality of “mines are fine as long as they aren’t in my backyard” is over. Everyone has to claim responsibility for the damage created by them. Everyone who is reading this newsletter is using some sort of electronic device whose components had to be mined in order to build them. Mines are not going to go away, but we can continue work towards creating far better mine management practices and holding those responsible for enforcing those practices to a higher standard. Companies and corporations who blatantly ignore required compliances need to face serious consequences instead of the little hand slaps they currently receive.

Maybe I am just old school but I still use pen and paper when I can, electronics and every thing they do to make our lives easier and faster are great, but they come with a great price. That price is being paid for by our lands and eco-systems. I challenge everyone to take the time to understand how your lives have been changed by these mines and the footprint you leave behind. Maybe write a letter instead of sending an email, we all know the post office could certainly use a little business.

Best,

Chris “Vinny” Vincent

Upper Midwest Council Conservation Director



Saturday Morning Fly Tying

Join us on Saturday mornings have a cup of coffee and tie some flies while talking a little fishing.

FREE there is no cost to join us.

At the Fly Shop

138 West Main, Perham, MN 56573

If you have tying tools bring them otherwise we have some extra for those that do not have them.

Saturday, December 2, 2023, 9:00 – 10:30 am

Saturday December 16, 2023, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Saturday December 30, 2023, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Saturday January 13, 2024, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Saturday January 27, 2024, 9:00 - 10:30 am

Submitted by:

Paul Beckmann, Upper Midwest Council Fly Tying

UPPER MIDWEST COUNCIL CHAPTER AND AFFILIATE NEWS AND HAPPENINGS



The Lew Jewett Club began the winter membership meetings October 19th.

It was great to catch up with fellow members. Many had stories of fishing this past summer. Our guest speaker was David Holmes, Owner/Operator of David Holmes Guiding LLC. He gave a great presentation about fishing the Upper Mississippi River. The focus was on small mouth bass. He talked about the fish's behavior and how it changes with the weather conditions and river level. He showed a detailed understanding of the areas of the river he fishes, referring to islands, rocky areas, and riffles. I was surprised to find he uses a jet boat instead of a drift boat. He is a US Coast Guard Licensed Captain. He discussed specific flies and tactics to use based on the stream flow and the weather.



Our next club meeting
will be December 19th at
Josephs Grill.

Our guest speaker is **Stu Neville**. Stu is the son of fellow members Rick and Janet Neville.

Stu has had the good fortune of fishing the waters surrounding Hayward, WI his whole life, and is the new owner of Hayward Fly Fishing Company. He guides the historic river systems of northwest WI, specializing in small-mouth bass and musky on the fly.

He happily gives back to the rivers by serving as Chair of the Board of Directors at the Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon and helping to organize the annual Namekagon River cleanup. Stu believes that a healthy river starts with a healthy watershed and an engaged, caring river community.

Lew Jewett Fly Fishers Club held its annual Chili Fest at Ellison Park on the banks of the Mississippi River on Sunday, October 29th. The fishing was slow but the sun kept the hands warm and the chili helped fill and warm us up.

Thanks to all who participated!



ARROWHEAD FLY FISHERS

Arrowhead Fly Fishers hosts its annual fly tying sessions January 20, February 10 and March 9 from 11-2pm at Harrison Community Center in Duluth. These sessions are free and open to the public. The club provides vices and fly tying materials for those who need them. We also provide a light lunch of soup and cookies.

The sessions are popular with members. It is a great way to learn new patterns and techniques, chat about fishing and teach those just learning to tie flies. Woolie buggers, micro leeches, soft hackles, BWOs and zebra midges are among the many types of flies tied at these events.

IF4 (International Fly-Fishing Film Festival) will be held on February 4, 2024 at Clyde Iron, Duluth, MN. Tickets are: \$18.00 in advance, available at Great Lakes Fly Shop and Superior Fly Angler or \$20.00 at the door. Doors will open at 3: Door Prizes/ Raffles/ Exhibitors/ Drinks!! Event hosted by Arrowhead Fly Fishers Club and Gitche Gume Trout Unlimited. Sneak Previews at <https://www.flyfilmfest.com/>

If you buy your film tickets in advance at the Duluth area local fly shops, ask about the incentive for buying raffles tickets in advance.



PROJECT HEALING WATERS

APPLETON WISCONSIN—FOX VALLEY

Here we are in our second month of the tying season and the group is putting out some really nice flies. One of our participants took on the challenge of tying an Atlantic Salmon fly called “The Durham Ranger”. This is no small feat as this is a very hard pattern to master. This is only his second year of tying flies and I think he hit it out of the park. (See Below)

The group has grown quite a bit since the last newsletter. We have added six new participants, five who have never tied a fly before. One is a seasoned tier who exceeds at the smallest of patterns and shared with us some of the size 28-32 midges and emergers he has done. Most impressive was a size 28 parachute Adams he tied just to see if he could do it.

We have split our group into two different classes of beginners and intermediate tiers. The beginner group is working through some fundamental flies and will start the Bronze Award flies most likely next season. The intermediate group is currently working through the Silver Award Handbook and Gold next year. December is a short month and we will meet only one time and tie a pattern called the “Renegade” which will be hung inside a glass ornament to hang on a Christmas tree.

Cheers, Vinny



FLY FISHING WOMEN OF MINNESOTA

Sally Noll, Chair

The Club continued with a busy 2023 year into fall. For “Fishing around Town” events, our next event was located a little further way and titled “Fishing around Town on the Road in Preston MN” (September 23-24) and hosted by Monta Hayner (Past Chair). It was a good weekend although the Friday and Saturday rainfall made stream visibility a problem at times. The group first met at the Driftless Fly Fishing Company to review best flies to use and to organize groups to fish in different areas. One of our new members got her first trout on the water that weekend!! Fishing continued on Sunday along with a little bit of shopping in the area as well! In October, a steelhead-fishing trip on the Brule was organized by Hillary Pennella (Vice Chair). Several hardy women braved the not-so good weather to head out on the water. No big fish were caught but for some of the participants, this was a first time opportunity for them to explore steelhead fishing. My thanks to the entire board and club member volunteers to help put on the many events this year!! We are so grateful for your efforts!



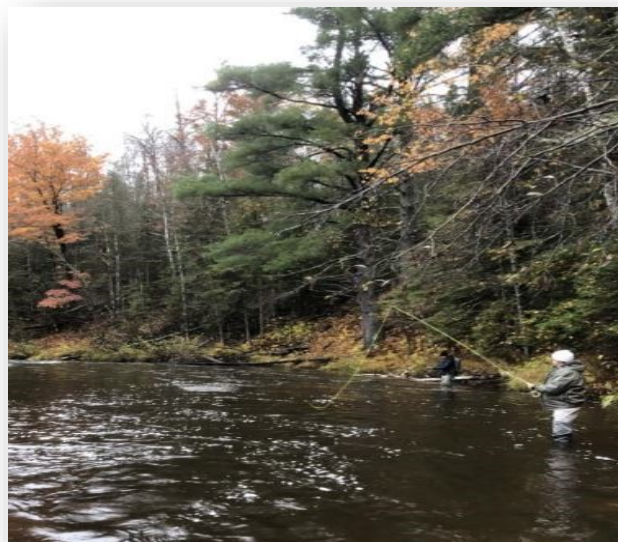
Our annual club membership meeting was held in early November. It was our first in-person club meeting since 2019 due to COVID disruptions. At the meeting, a year-end review was presented and board election results were announced. We have three board members leaving at the end of December – Amy Anderson (Treasurer), Kimberly Pierson (Member at Large), and Monta Hayner (Past Chair). I would like to thank them as well as current board members for their service to the board. All our positions are volunteer positions, so the club could not function without these members!!

The 2024 board members consist of Hillary Pennella (Chair), Marissa Merriman (Vice-Chair), Jess Miller (Secretary), Treasurer (Jane Austin), Communications/Website (Ginger Flaten), Members at Large (Cyndee Fern, Jaime Lehman, Emilie Love, Marcy Russell), Past Chair (Sally Noll)

Event and education programs are being planned for 2024. We will also have our club booth at the Great Waters Expo 2024 in March at Hamline University in Saint Paul. Please stop by and visit our booth! Better yet, please attend our “Fly By Night” Social that Friday night (March 15th). Everyone is welcome to come and socialize!

The club is also looking for some donations of fly tying equipment and supplies as our current set of materials has been used up or is in poor shape. These things would be used in different classes or loaned to members on a temporary basis. If anyone has some items to donate, please email Hillary at ffwnmn@gmail.com. Thanks for any help that could be provided.

For women that might be interested in our club and/or want to join, please visit our website. <https://flyfishingwomenmn.com/>



FFi Women Connect Gather in Driftless Region

By Monta Hayner **October 2023**



The third annual Fly Fishers International Women Connect Driftless Rendezvous was a success on many levels. We were able to increase the number of participants to twenty without changing the location – Cedar Valley Resort in Whalen, Minnesota. We hailed from all over the country. The event gave us each an opportunity to meet and get to know other women with a variety of experience and expertise, who share a passion for fly fishing. Some knew the area and helped others find fishing locations. Some had knowledge of flies and shared the flies that were working. Some shared their casting knowledge to help others improve their cast. Some were great cooks; others were amazing helpers. Some just saw what needed to be done and took care of it. Everyone found an opportunity to contribute to the event.

The lodge provides a kitchen to prepare meals. Preparing and eating meals helped to build a sense of community. At breakfast we would discuss what we each wanted out of the day. Some had guided trips, others wanted ease of walking, others wanted big fish or people to fish with. We would organize the day and head out, making our lunches to go. At the end of each day, during a group dinner, we would share our experiences, inspiring others to go where we went and do what we did the next day. We discussed which flies were effective.

We told stories about unusual experiences we had, such as the curious bull that followed one angler. The talks delved deeply into our experiences fishing, and especially fishing as a woman.

The beauty of the area was stunning. The Fall colors were not at their peak yet, but a few trees were starting to show off. The abundance of fish in these spring fed streams were visible with the low water levels, which meant we were visible to the fish too. It just meant we had to try a little harder and be a little more stealth.



We interrupted a fine day of fishing for a prearranged tour of the DNR fish hatchery. We were impressed by the hard work and attention to detail needed to grow trout to fulfill the need to stock Minnesota lakes, ponds, and streams. Many of the streams in the Driftless area of Minnesota have self-sustaining trout populations. We learned that many of the trout raised at the hatchery are stocked in trout lakes as well as the stream fisheries that are open year-round in Minnesota.

As usual for fall in the north, we had at least one cold, wet day. It gave us opportunities to stay closer, do a little shopping at the local shops, and sightsee. The town of Lanesboro is made up of a few blocks of 150-year-old buildings, with independently owned shops and restaurants. Local artists sell at the Lanesboro Art Gallery. Local Amish-made goods can be found at the farmers market or advertised for sale at homes in the area. We occasionally passed Amish horse-drawn buggies on our way to fishing spots. Many participants fished for short stretches of time at the local ponds and the stream right through town, then went to a store or restaurant to warm up.



We have reserved the lodge for October 7-13, 2024.