



Blue Lines

Quarterly
Newsletter of
the Upper
Midwest
Council

**FALL
2024**



**FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL**



Sharing a pool with the master. Photo Larry Olson

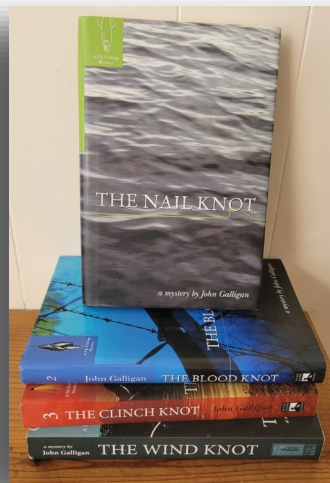
INSIDE EDITION:

LARRY OLSON fencelinepool@gmail.com

Communications Director, Upper Midwest Council

I first met John Galligan at the Tom Helgeson show back in 2004, already twenty years ago. The first book in his series of Fly Fishing Mysteries, “The Nail Knot”, had just been published. He went on to write three others. John was teaching writing at the time in Madison, WI and was a great short story author with a Pushcart Prize nomination.

These are very well written and a fun read for the slower times in our fishing. His latest series are the, “Bad Axe” mystery books. We have an amazing wealth of opportunities to “Fish All Waters All Fish” in the Upper Midwest. I have had great experiences in Smallmouth and Carp fly fishing on the Mississippi this year. I encourage all readers to consider sharing a story of something new you have done this season. Let me know..



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

UPPER MIDWEST COUNCIL PRESIDENT: LYTH'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

As the weather begins to cool from the summer's heat we all know that fall is not far away, nor is winter for that matter. Last minute fishing trips take on an exaggerated importance at this time of year. But be sure to know that the fishing, although it might change a bit, is not over yet for this year. Many states have fishing opportunities available all year long, so take heart, it's not over yet.

Indoor options to participate in this sport also are increasingly available. Many of you should explore the FFI Website (www.flyfishersinternational.org) for a wealth of information and learning opportunities about fly fishing. There are many resources for fly tying, fly casting, conservation and how to improve your own club's activities and fundraising. The opportunities are great on this website! Also, the FFI International staff are continuously improving the website, you really should check it out!

Here is some positive news from the Upper Midwest Council (UMC). Kayln Hoggard from the Madison, Wisconsin area is a new Certified Casting Instructor and has agreed to replace me as the Casting Director for the UMC. I am thrilled to present him to you as he will be a great addition to our Council's casting program! He's young and energetic and is a great fly caster and fly fisher.

The big event that the UMC participates in is the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo held in March each year and is sponsored by Minnesota Trout Unlimited. The dates for the Expo next year are March 21-23, 2025, and will be held again at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN. The UMC provides free casting lessons to the attendees of the Expo, and it is a great way to learn about casting. We have many Certified Casting Instructors that participate to teach the attendees. We provided over 200 lessons during the 2024 Expo.

Many clubs meet only sparingly during the summer months so that their members can go fishing. As we enter the fall clubs are beginning to ramp up their club activities and one of the main activities should be trying to increase their membership levels. Membership levels in clubs and the FFI need to increase for us to remain strong. I ask all of you to encourage a friend to join the FFI, it's a great way to enhance your enjoyment of our sport.

Lastly, many of you remember the great FFI International in-person gatherings which were called Expos in the past. These were discontinued during the Covid Epidemic for health and safety reasons. The FFI International Board of Directors is beginning to plan for an in-person international event to be held on September 25-27, 2025. The location will likely be Grand Rapids, Michigan. More information will be coming out as the planning work gets done. It will be the 60th Anniversary of the FFI.

There is much going on in the UMC and FFI so please ask a friend to join with us and please participate yourselves. This is the best way to get the most out of your membership.

Tight loops, lines and threads,

Lyth Hartz

President UMC

P.S. On a final note, I want to thank Monta Hayner and Peter Garretson for inviting me on a float trip on the St. Croix River fishing for smallmouth bass in Peter's drift boat. It was a great day! The fun part of FFI membership!



CASTING DIRECTOR REPORT

KAYLN HOGGARD, CI

FFI has rolled out a CI and THCI Certification Roadmap. “This roadmap is designed to help keep you on track during your journey to becoming a certified casting instructor. It is broken into three sections (1) frequently asked questions, (2) a notional timeline, and (3) recommended actions for each of the steps on the timeline.”

Along with the step-by-step guide of all the things you need to know before, during, and after becoming a certified casting instructor, there is also a handy timeline to guide you through the general idea of how long it takes to prepare for the exam, and what you need to be thinking about each step of the way. While generating this document, many other logistical components were created in order to make the process of learning about, trying to accomplish, and taking the certification exam easier.

If you haven't been on the path toward becoming a certified instructor, then you may not know the significance of this document and the work that was put into. It is difficult to put into words, but I will try to shed light on why we needed to do this:

In the past it was difficult for a candidate to know the intimate details of what it would really take to become a Certified Instructor. Many people didn't know the benefits of mentors, much less that there was a pool of mentors out there to work with. In the past it was easier for potential candidates to get lost in the website and never get into communication with the right people to help them along their journey. Due to this, it was difficult to know when you were ready to take the exam, what information you needed to know to pass it, that you needed to make sure that you completed the CI Workshop, how much everything was going to cost, when and where the exams were held, or even that private exams were an option. With the completion of this document and the ongoing efforts to improve the process, we hope that those troubles are a thing of the past.

The hope, I believe, is that the work we are doing now will continue to grow our community and continue to enrich the quality of our casting instructors, members, and the fly fishing community as a whole.

CONSERVATION REPORT

Chris “Vinny” Vincent

Conservation Director Upper Midwest Council

FFi Board of Directors—Conservation VP

SURFING MIDWEST STYLE

Surf boats and wake surfing has come to not only be a growing form of recreational fun but also a controversial one. There are legitimate concerns on both sides of the issue. My opinion is that it boils down to the sharing of a waterway and following the rules of each waterway. Fisherman will say that all surf boats belong only in the ocean and wake boarders will say fishermen are just in the way. While neither group actually owns the waterway, the tensions will always be high when it is shared.

In Andrew Bahl’s recent article in the Capt Times he writes about the controversy brewing in Wisconsin, MN, and MI. I have included some excerpts from his article and will leave you to form your own opinions on the issue.

In recent years, wake boats — more powerful vessels with larger ballast tanks and other tools to create bigger waves — have grown in popularity, as they are better for water sports like wake surfing. They make up a minority of boat sales but have generated an outsized amount of attention and, some fear, cause outsized harm to the lakes.

Concerns range from the potential to disrupt aquatic life to fears that the boats more easily spread invasive species, to the nuisance their wakes create for others trying to enjoy a peaceful cruise on the lake or fishing.

Proponents of the boats say there is weak data showing that the boats harm lakes and that boaters just need to use common sense on the water.

There is no statewide regulation of wake boats. The boating industry pushed Wisconsin legislators to set standards last year, but environmentalists found the proposal lacking and lawmakers left Madison in 2024 without taking up the issue.

“Even if the lake is well-suited, there are competing users and we're going to have to figure out how to support everyone for their enjoyment of what is public property in the state of Wisconsin”, said Paul Reith, a Dane County delegate for the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, a citizen group that advises the Department of Natural Resources on policy.

Do wake boats damage Wisconsin lakes? More powerful wake boats make up a small but growing segment of watercraft sales in Wisconsin, where watersports are a multibillion-dollar industry. State rules restrict boaters from going at a high speed within 200 feet of shore. The idea is to keep everyone safe and protect the environment along the shoreline.

Because wake boats are more powerful than a fishing or pontoon boat, research from the University of Minnesota found they need to remain a greater distance from shore in order for the waves they generate to dissipate. Critics of the boats argue this is a sign the boats contribute to shoreline erosion at a faster rate, though the Minnesota study didn't directly address that question.

In Michigan, the state recommended wake boats stay at least 500 feet from shore when operated at a higher power, pointing to research from Ontario that as much as 72% of wave energy on a lake was generated by powerboats.

The design of the wake boat means it directs that force downward, which some research shows will stir up sediment, disturbing vegetation that is vital for fish habitat and the overall health of a lake.

When researchers discovered a trove of ancient canoes in Lake Mendota earlier this year, one theory is the artifacts suddenly appeared because they happened to be buried in a marina where wake boats typically turn around, scattering sediment in the process.

Scott Rolfs, who helps run Lakes at Stake, a group that has lobbied for action to curb the effects of wake boats, pointed to the experience of his local waterway, Big Cedar Lake in Washington County.

“All of our deep weed beds that held all the fish have been pretty well blasted out here over the last five years,” he said.

Wake boat supporters have argued that those concerns are overblown, rely on cherry-picked data or are issues that apply to all boats, not just wake boats.

Boat makers pointed to an industry-sponsored study indicating that wake boats need only be kept 200 feet from shore.

Bill Banholzer, a professor of chemical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a wake-surfing fan, said there is a body of research indicating that waves created by high winds are more powerful than any generated by boats. In addition, he said studies often look at wake boats that bear little resemblance to what is on the market now. Banholzer noted a study from the [Indiana Academy of Sciences](#) showed the boats pose a risk to only the shallowest parts of the lake, which he said matches Wisconsin data for Northwoods lakes. And while there are worries that the larger ballast tanks could allow invasive species to hitch a ride and spread more easily, wake boaters say they often keep to one lake, unlike anglers who regularly move around in search of a catch.

Darren Kuhn, boating law administrator for the DNR, said the agency “has not seen any sort of dramatic increase in citations or complaints with wake surfing and wake boating” in Wisconsin, though the agency doesn’t have specific data on wake boats. The DNR has roughly 200 field staff to enforce boating laws on 15,000 Wisconsin lakes. Even if a complaint is lodged about a nuisance on the lake, it is not a given that a warden could respond in time to cite the boater. “We’re not going to be on every body of water, every day of the year,” Kuhn said.

Perhaps it’s time to try and work together on a large issue such as this, a simple start of each group conceding the battle lines and just communicating with each other would go a long ways. I’m just a river bum fly fisher with no dog in this fight but even I can see the concerns from both sides.





Historically, Wisconsin has been a leader in developing our waterways to harness energy and generate hydropower. Today, we have about 3,800 dams in our rivers and streams, and we are leading the nation once again -- this time in restoring our rivers through selective dam removal. While once serving a valuable function, many of these dams have outlived their economic usefulness and have become structurally unsafe, leaving hundreds of communities facing the decision of whether to repair or remove their dams. Removing these dams that no longer make sense is now considered an important alternative by dam owners, local officials, citizens and resource agencies. Public appreciation for free-flowing rivers is increasing, and more communities now realize that a healthy river can be the focal point of a healthy community.

Why remove dams?

For safety reasons. Dams are under the constant pressures of water and time and gradually deteriorate. Many of Wisconsin's dams have not been properly maintained and are now public safety hazards. The DNR is responsible for dam inspections, compliance with safety standards and issuing repair and removal orders.

Dam removal makes good economic sense. In Wisconsin, repairing a dam typically costs 3 to 5 times more than the cost of removal. The on-going costs of maintenance, repairs, operation, liability and dredging the impoundment further increases the true cost of a dam.

Dam removal can restore a river's recreational and natural values. Dams severely fragment river ecosystems, degrade water quality and devastate fisheries. The DNR has identified dams as one of the biggest threats to Wisconsin's aquatic biodiversity.

Dam removal re-creates recreational and aesthetic opportunities -- from canoeing and kayaking to fishing and wildlife watching. Restoring the land that is flooded by dams has also created parks and wildlife habitat, like those at **Woolen Mills** on the **Milwaukee River**, and **Fulton** on the **Yahara River**.

Dam Facts

- More than 3,800 dams block Wisconsin's rivers and streams; some more than 150 years old.
- In Wisconsin, dam removal typically costs 3 to 5 times less than dam repair.
- Fewer than 200 dams in the state produce hydropower.
- Dams harm rivers by fragmenting river ecosystems, degrading water quality, destroying critical habitats, depleting oxygen levels, and killing migrating fish.
- More than 130 dams have been removed in Wisconsin since 1950.
- Removal of 4 dams on the Baraboo River improved water quality, smallmouth bass fishing and restored all 115+ miles to a free-flowing river.
- The River Alliance of Wisconsin has successfully helped 35 communities with dam removals.

(Over please)

Why is dam removal such a big deal?

Hundreds of Wisconsin communities face this decision. Today, hundreds of Wisconsin's dams are functionally obsolete, unsafe and face repair costs of at least \$300,000 within the next few years. Repair and removal decisions are made locally, so informed citizen involvement and input is critical to the decision process.

Dam removal can be a difficult issue for communities. Because the dam has "always been there" the idea of removing it may seem radical at first, but communities are learning that dam removal can create new recreational opportunities, dramatically improve water quality, increase parkland, and lead to community revitalization and economic development opportunities.

In 2004, this program was funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, the McKnight Foundation and River Alliance member contributions

LARRY OLSON

FTG BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Whip Finish Journal ,Editor

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FFi FLY TYING GROUP

RENDEZVOUS

September 27 & 28, 2024

Dallas, TX

(20 minutes from both airports)

**Friday and Saturday tying from
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**Friday night tiers exchange, banquet
and fundraiser**

**Fly tying classes and workshops
both days**

Registration starts June 10, 2024

FFi
FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL

FFi
FLY TYING
GROUP

UPPER MIDWEST COUNCIL CHAPTER AND AFFILIATE NEWS AND HAPPENINGS



It has been a busy summer, and many of our members have been out on their own fishing adventures. We are looking forward to hearing these stories when we resume our dinner meetings in October.

Over the summer, Lew Jewett held casting sessions at Linwood Park in St. Paul. A big thank you to one of our local fly shops, Mend Provisions, for helping get the word out. Some of the people who attended the casting sessions joined Lew Jewett.

We were able to reschedule our smallmouth bass fishing event on the Cannon River at the Cannon River Wilderness Area northwest of Faribault. Unfortunately, some big storms moved through days before significantly raising the river. The event was still held, and although there was little fishing, we still had a picnic lunch and had a good time.

We still have a couple of tentative events planned:

- A mid-week Trout outing near Preston in September or the first week of October.
- Our annual Chili Fest at Ellison Park in Monticello.

We are looking forward to our upcoming dinner meetings:

- October: 10/15/2024 – Grace Loppnow, MN DNR, Invasive Carp.
- December: 12/17/2024
- February: 02/18/2025
- April: 04/15/2025



Arrowhead Fly Fishers Club (AFF)

All Monthly club meetings are free and open to the public! All meetings held from 6-8 pm at BoomTown Woodfire Bar & Grill, Duluth, MN (This is a new location for monthly meetings)

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 CLUB MEETING

PROGRAM: Table Talks by AFF Talent Something new for both experienced & new fly fishers!

OCTOBER 15, 2024, CLUB MEETING PROGRAM: TBD

NOVEMBER 19, 2024, CLUB MEETING

PROGRAM: Annual Meeting and Speaker Matt Miller, MN Conservation Officer

JANUARY 21, 2025, CLUB MEETING Joint meeting with Gitche Gumee Trout Unlimited

PROGRAM: WI & MN DNR speakers with updates on research projects and fish counts

Watch Arrowhead Fly Fishers Facebook page for announcements of dates for Stream walks and Conservation work on local streams.

Submitted by Laurie Arndt, AFF Past President



PROJECT HEALING WATERS

APPLETON WISCONSIN—FOX VALLEY

Project Healing Waters has been going full steam into our fishing outings. Our season is quickly coming to a close and we will jump right into our fly tying sessions. We have another great selection of patterns this year, everything from panfish to salmon.

We have gained a few new participants and have given well over 50 hours of casting instruction using the FFI Casting Skills Development at the Foundation level.

HOOAHWI Veterans Fishing University has been hard at work with the casting lessons also. In class number 1 we have six participants who have never picked up a fly rod before, including the daughter of one of the students who is 9 years old. We started out with the very basics of the components of the fly rod and how to assemble / disassemble it correctly. We started out with horizontal loop control and understanding how the cast should look. We then worked on the pancakes, eggs, and bacon section of the Casting Skills Development Foundation level instruction. We then set up the casting course using three 36in hoops and worked on line management, loop control, and accuracy.

All of the veterans put in the work and practiced at home and came back with abilities to accurately put their flies into the hoop centers at 25, 30 feet and the bonus round I set up at 40'. My star pupil was Jayden the 9 year old who just did outstanding and made it look easy, kudos to her!

All of my students have really enjoyed using FFI casting techniques and have made great strides in a short amount of time.

Great job guys!! Vinny

