



Spring  
2026



THINK SPRING IN THE DRIFTLESS!



NEONICS DAY AT THE CAPITAL

## **Tackling the Neonic Crisis**

**Monta Hayner**

I have been working on behalf of the Upper Midwest Council with Twin Cities Trout Unlimited as part of the Campaign for Cleaner Seeds. The Board of the Upper Midwest Council approved joining the coalition in January 2026. Both Wisconsin (2025) and Minnesota (2026) have had forums on research into Neonicotinoids insecticides. A summary of the Minnesota forum presentations with more information about neonicotinoids can be found in the attached flier: Attention Hunters, Anglers, Nature Lovers and Outdoors Folks with references to the research on page 2.

Neonic insecticide has leached from the seeds into the ground, ground water, rivers and lakes. They are killing pollinators and aquatic insects. Effecting ecosystems. They are also found in humans. These are neurotoxins. We do not understand all of the effects of neonics in humans but they are associated with increased risk of birth defects and cognitive impairments.

The Campaign for Cleaner Seeds is trying to get a law enacted that creates a verification of need program for insecticide-treated seeds like one successfully implemented in Quebec, Canada and being adopted in New York and Vermont. It would also prohibit lawn and garden neonic use that needlessly contaminate places Minnesotans live, work and play.

The Campaign for Cleaner Seeds planned a Day at the Capital on March 9th. They made a stand on the capital steps and visited many Senators and Representative. A hearing was set with the House Agriculture Committee for March 11th from 1:00-3:00 to hear testimony on House File 3704 that details the actions we are requesting. Senator Kunesh has authored Senate File 4052 similar to HF 3704. A hearing with the Senate Agriculture Committee has not been set. We will see where this legislative session goes and I will be reporting on this subject.



**COMING THIS OCTOBER '25**  
**THE NEW**  
**FLY OF THE MONTH**

**The Fly Tying Group has updated the “Fly of the Month”**

**Submissions will now be easy. Members from around the globe will be encouraged to share their favorite patterns.**

**You get better at tying flies by tying flies. Be a part of our community of tiers and send in your ideas and tie some flies.**

**Fish your creations or better yet, give them to a new fly fisher and have them catch their first fish on a fly you tied!**

**The first 12 months of submissions will have a chance to win (based on website traffic metrics) a new vise!**

**Here's what you need to do to submit a Fly:**

**Materials list**

**Numbered Step by Step instructions**

**Photo of each numbered step**

**Photo of completed fly**

**Your name and contact information**

**ALL SUBMISSIONS (AND QUESTIONS)**  
**FOM.FTG@GMAIL.COM**



## **June is Women Fly Fishing Month.**

Each council is sponsoring a women's event for Women's Fly-Fishing month. The Upper Midwest Council's event is Get Your Cast On, June 28th, 1-3 pm at East River Flats Park in Minneapolis. We are focusing on FFi Casting Development tasks. These will help your fishing casting. We will be working on FFi Casting Development Bronze and Silver Awards. A practice area and a test area will be set up with coaching in the practice area. Then you will have an opportunity to test for the bronze level, or if you have that you can test for the silver level. Here is the link to the Casting Development tasks to preview or practice. <https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Fly-Casting-Education/Casting-Education/Fly-Casting-Skills-Development>

Women Connect provides monthly Zoom presentations. Tuesday March 24th the Zoom meeting will be Our Casting Journey – 5 women tell their stories. With our own Monta Hayner on the panel. If you're interested in pursuing casting this will be a great resource.

## **Lyth's Random Thoughts**

As we get ready for Spring to arrive and are getting excited about the upcoming fishing season I have been thinking about the desire of many FFI members to bring along the younger generation to learn about fishing and especially fly fishing. I remembered an article about tips for adults to teach children to fish. I found the article and wanted to post it in our Blue Lines Newsletter for this issue. The article was originally written for the Lew Jewett Fly Fishers several years ago. The tips aren't ranked; all are useful, but safety is particularly important. I think the tips are still relevant today so here is the article.

### **Fishing & Fly Fishing with Children - Tips for Adults**

- Keep in mind that fishing is a social event for most children. They are not likely to be impressed by the technology of your fishing equipment.
- Children have “awe & wonderment” so be sure to notice the birds, the clouds, the flowers, the trees, the animals in addition to the fish – kids love that.
- Get the child quality equipment that fits them – poor equipment can decrease their enjoyment. (Quality equipment does not need to be expensive.)
- Be safe with water – wear a life jacket. Be safe also with sun, lightning, bad weather, insects, poisonous plants, and be sure to wear eye protection – it's best if you as an adult also use safety items so that the child will follow your good example. Fish safe today so you can fish again tomorrow.
- If you fish by wading in a stream, please be sure to have the child fish upstream of the responsible adult and always within eyesight of you.
- Quit fishing before the child wants to quit – (we can come back again tomorrow and fish again) – if the child wants to go home, do so without complaining as that trip is already over
- As an adult, don't fish yourself when fishing with a child. Pay attention to the child and help them to learn without the distraction of fishing yourself. This is especially true with very young children and can be modified as they get older and their skills improve.
- Don't forget to bring water to drink.
- Most important, Have Fun!      Lyth Hartz   UMC Secretary

## **The man that taught me to climb trees.**

There are leaps in understanding when someone travels along the fly road. At least there certainly have been for me. Maybe its when you start to really understand the nuances of leader design, emotional moments of trial and error, or just an amazing video on YouTube. Maybe it's when you finally get that one cast ironed out in the grass, and now all of your casts have improved dramatically. Maybe it's when your ideas about fishing or fish behavior get turned upside down by observing a master. Sometimes it's observing a blue heron wading and stalking fish the way you should. Other times it can just be a very lucky fisherman that is somehow constantly hooking up right down stream, and you haven't even gotten a denial. When this type of revelation happens for me, it is usually linked to a person. One of these people is the man that taught me to climb trees, John Conits.

John is one of the great ones. He is one of those people that love the fly game. He treats every outing as a chance to learn, and he actually cares about this little fly game we play. John is the owner/head guide at <https://www.haresearflyfishing.com> in Greenville, SC. So, if you are ever on his side of the mountain and want to learn a thing or two about catching fish on the fly hit him up. Tell him Kalyn sent you. John and I were getting our legs guiding up on the ridge in the Carolina's at about the same time. It just so happened that we were both taking trips from a mutual friend and were supposed to meet each other to talk shop.

I was down on the east fork of the French Broad one day getting into the trout pretty well, but I was really sneaking my way down to a pod of fish that held a monster I had seen before. So, my back is smashed into an overhanging Rhododendron, and I'm slowly creeping around with my eyes on the water when I see a line come out of no where and land right where it should. I looked around the corner of this tree, and quietly said, "dude you scared the shit out of me." I never heard him, and I'm pretty sure he never

heard me, which in and of itself is no small feat on these rivers. I've always been a pretty observant guy, it's a relatively quiet section of the river, and I got out stealth waded to the spot. Who is this guy and why is he doing things the right way? We end up talking about the run we were in, and reluctantly we both gave up the details of why we were working that spot. We've been friends ever since.

Shortly after we met, we were on the phone quite a bit. We were talking strategies, flies, which fish we had found where, and every little thing we had come up with along the way. We were spending a lot of our time on the Davidson River outside of Brevard, NC. The D is notorious for being tough on certain sections during certain times of the year. This pushed people like John and me to new heights when it came to stalking, observing, and learning the water. One day John had found some nice browns that were setting up in feeding lanes during the day and he asked me to come out and fish with him. In the details he had mentioned that if I got there before him to take my time and watch the run while I waited for him.

I get down to the spot, and see that John is already parked and down by the river. I grab a couple of rods and slowly make my way down the path to where you can get a good look at the run from cover. Before I get to the end of the path I hear from off to my left and above me in a whisper, "HEY!" I slowly turn and see John up in a tree overlooking the run. He says to me, "hey man, don't walk any farther down the path. Come up here by me. He's in there!" I made my way over to John's look out spot, and start peering over the edge down into the river. Sure enough, there is a nice sized brown on the back of the shoal, and he is indeed feeding. The bad news was that this was going to be a ridiculous cast, line management, and hook set situation. So John gets down and we go to work. "How long of a leader do we need?" The water is gin clear, the sun is out, and its warmer than we would prefer. "Do you think a size 18 or a 20? Well, if I go with a bead head the fly may never make it down to him. It'll be too heavy to get through the shoal." Not to mention this is going to have to be a 50 plus foot drift with a pile cast, major mending, and some weird current changes. Also, I will have to be on my knees in the sand casting over one thing and under another. So, we get something rigged up. As I remember it was some small dry to keep up a midge of some sort or another. The dry was going to serve to keep us right above the bottom, and the midge was the food of choice. John gets back to the observatory, and I crawl my way down to the only place that I can possibly fish from. It takes me a little while to work out where the cast is going to need to be. John is giving his best tips from way up above. I finally decide that we need to give this a shot, and see what happens. The fly drifts through ok, and for a second John was making quiet noises, and then says, "He hated it."

Back to the drawing board. We aren't going to get many drifts anyway, and, "he hated it," doesn't sound too promising. I finagled some way to get the rig, and start messing with stuff. I switch out flies, add a tiny split above the size 20 rainbow warrior I've switched to, and start talking to John about the cast and the drift again. I can't see the fish very well at all, but I know exactly where it is. A cast, a reach mend, stacking line, and the drift is back on. This time I could tell he could see the fly when it came near him. John suddenly yells, "Set." I do as quickly as I can, and the rig comes flying out of the water back toward me. "Could you not feel anything?" "Nope." "Man, he was down there chewing on it." Nineteen times out of twenty I certainly would have blown this fish out after missing the hook set but he doesn't seem too bothered. We hold on for a minute. The fish is still there, but he shouldn't be. Might as well let him set back up and start eating again. I am still on my knees by the way. "Alright, give him a shot." That's all I needed to know. He just grabbed something floating down the conveyor belt. Cast, mend, stack, and we are back at it. This time I'm watching John. I knew I was drifting the same way, and I was going to have to go off of him. I can't see the situation well enough, and his face lets me know. Hook set. Big splash. Broken tippet.

"Oh God you had him!!!"

You win some, and if you are like me, you lose more, but the lesson was learned. Be sneaky. Observe the environment. Know your quarry. Be patient. And by all means, climb some trees.

Submitted by Kayln Hoggard



## Iowa Driftless Rendezvous

Join the FFi Upper Midwest Council & FFi Women Connect this fall for our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Driftless Rendezvous! This event will be held in the heart of the Iowa Driftless. This area is known for its expansive trout habitat and beautiful, deeply carved river valleys with pristine spring creeks. This is an event hosted by women, for women! Registration includes food & lodging; all other travel/transportation, licensing, and guide trips are at your own expense.

**Monday Oct. 12 - Sunday Oct. 18, 2026**

Where: Bear Creek Cabins, Highlandville, Iowa

<https://www.bearcreekcabinsia.com/>

**To Register:**

Info & registration will be posted on: [umcffi.org/women-connect/](http://umcffi.org/women-connect/) and other regional women's fishing groups.

You can also contact [womenconnect.UMC.ffi@gmail.com](mailto:womenconnect.UMC.ffi@gmail.com).



Payment will be handled through Eventbrite.

This year's rendezvous is located in Highlandville, Iowa, just 4 miles south of the Minnesota border. We will provide fishing maps and will orient you to Iowa's nearly 100 cold-water trout streams, 40 of which are naturally producing. We have events planned throughout the week which could include: conservation, casting skills development, Driftless ecology & entomology, and of course, lots of fishing!!! Here's a YouTube channel to peak you interest. 70 videos of fishing the Iowa Driftless!!

<https://www.youtube.com/@FLYALLSZN/search?query=iowa%20Driftless>

**Getting there:** Flights into Des Moines (DSM), Minneapolis (MSP) or Rochester (RST) airports.

**What to bring:** 4-5wt rod/reel with floating line, rubber soled boots & waders, net, polarized sunglasses.

**Pricing & Package Info:**

**LODGING:** Bear Creek Cabins - We have reserved 2 large duplexes for the week that each sleep 7 people. The duplexes have a connecting door. Each duplex has a kitchen, 2 bathrooms, a living and family room, a large covered deck, and patio with firepit. We have also reserved a cabin for the weekend of Oct 16-18 that sleeps 4 people.

**PRICING** includes all food and lodging. Everyone will have their own bed. Participants will help with food prep & clean up throughout the week. Not included: guide fees, tips, licensing, transportation, alcohol. You will be responsible for bringing your own fishing gear (4-5 wt rods w/ floating line recommended). **Individual participant pricing for the 2026 trip is as follows:**

<b>PRICING: Includes Bed, all Meals, and Swag</b>				
People in the lofts share a bath with the Main or Lower Level. Towels & linens are provided.				
	<b>Main Level</b>	<b>Lofts</b>		<b>Lower Level</b>
North Bear	Private Room \$770	Full Bed \$520	Twins Bed (3) \$445	Private Room \$770
				Twin Roll-away \$445
	Shared Bath			Shared Bath
South Bear	Private Room \$770	1 Full Bed \$520	3 twins \$445	Private Room \$770
				Twin Roll-away \$445
	Shared Bath			Shared Bath
Highland View - F & Sat nights (10/16-17)	4 beds \$255			

# UPPER MIDWEST COUNCIL CHAPTER AND AFFILIATE NEWS AND HAPPENINGS



We had a great experience at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo. Many attendees visited our table. We gained a few new or renewing members. I was especially taken by how much fun the volunteers had talking with attendees or with each other. It was very social. The Youth Program was a great success. There were 70 attendees, adults and youth, at the presentation. We handed out about 70 passports for youth to complete. We received 35 completed passports for the drawing. Three participant youth won fly rod outfits. The numbers were a little lower than last year. I attribute this to the impending blizzard on Saturday evening. Thank you, Peter Garetson, Monta Hayner and Marcy Russell, for putting on the Youth Program. Thank you, The Fly Angler, for the discount on the fly fishing outfits. Thank you Laughing Trout Bug Bank, Greg Winters, Fly Chucker's and Brookings Fly Shop, Cashiers, NC for fly donations.

Our dinner meeting in February was well attended. The speaker was Caleb Corona, owner of Regal Beagle Fly Fishing. He gave an in depth presentation on fishing for bass in the St. Croix and Mississippi River. He also spoke about his specialty flies he has developed.

Our next dinner meeting is April 21st, at Joseph Grill. It is our annual meeting where we will be voting on board members. If you are interested in being part of our board of directors talk to Monta Hayner to learn more. We would love to have some new board members. It is a great way to learn about being on a board and how we operate.

The speaker that evening will be Tyler Winter from the organization Native Fish for Tomorrow. <https://nativefishfortomorrow.org/> . Many of us have heard about our native brook trout, Tyler will be talking about conserving all native fish in Minnesota.

April 21st is our annual silent auction at the dinner meeting. We can keep our dues low because the auction supports most of our expenses. Please donate fishing items, books, guiding or skills training. Come ready to bid.

## Arrowhead Fly Fishers Club Spring Report

The snow will melt and AFF is looking for volunteers to help manage our local resources by putting temperature loggers into local streams as designated by the DNR, planting trees, be a stream or lake volunteer monitor or help the DNR survey trout lakes in the Grand Marais area. Contact Peder at [woollybugger@charter.net](mailto:woollybugger@charter.net) for details.

Join us at the monthly meetings on April 14th (Fishing the Namekagon River) and May 19th (Fishing for Steelhead on the North Shore). Location: BoomTown Bar & Grill, Duluth at 6PM social and 7PM presentation.

Laurie Arndt



**Volunteers needed to put temperature loggers into North Shore streams as designated by the DNR.**

[arrowheadflyfishers.com](http://arrowheadflyfishers.com)

