

Spring 2006 Edition

THE INSIDE SCOOP

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CCCTU Moves to Save the Pilgrim River Valley

By Bill Leder

CCCTU has begun a bold initiative to save part of the Pilgrim River Valley from urban development. Its current owner, the Heartwood Forestland Fund II (managed by The Forestland Group, LLC) has agreed to entertain the idea of selling this tract to the State of Michigan or other appropriate buyer provided necessary rates of return are met for Heartwood's investors. The contiguous 1,080 acres is located within three miles of the City of Houghton. The forest, which contains approximately two miles of the Pilgrim River between Superior and Pilgrim River Roads, is enrolled in Michigan's Commercial Forest Reserve Program that provides non-motorized public access for recreation.

This land — in a completely natural setting featuring steep hills, substantial ground water flows, abundant wild life, and a well-know trout stream — is unique because of its close proximity to an urbanizing area of some 15,000 people. If this land does not become part of the public domain, CCCTU believes there is a strong likelihood that it will be privately developed and thus lost forever to the public access that has been available for the past century.

On January 6, a request that the state acquire the land was forwarded to Rebecca Humphries, Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Copies were sent to Governor Jennifer Granholm, State Senator Michael Prusi, State Representative Rich Brown, Portage Charter Township Supervisor Bill Bingham, Evan McDonald with the Keweenaw Land Trust, Gina Nicholas with the Houghton/Keweenaw Conservation District, and Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited Executive Director Rich Bowman. The letter accompanying this article and a detailed



CCCTU Members on the Pilgrim

acquisition proposal with background information has been linked to the Chapter website at <http://coppercountrychaptertu.org>.

To its credit, the Heartwood Forestland Group, realizing the unique recreation potential of the Pilgrim River Valley, has proactively supported CCCTU in preparing the proposal.

Jim Baker, CCCTU President said, "I am pleased that our Chapter has taken this first important step to preserve the Pilgrim River Valley for future generations of outdoor enthusiasts. We sincerely appreciate the support of the Heartwood Forestland Group." Baker went on to say, "Although we have proposed acquisition by the state, there may well be other avenues of funding. We have a lot of work to do, and it has just begun."

Those Chapter members spearheading the effort are Steve Albee, Bill Deephouse, Bill Leder, and Shawn Hagan. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact them, or any CCCTU Board member.



Copper Country Chapter
P.O. Box 232
Hancock, MI 49930

2000 Michigan Chapter of the Year
2000 Silver Trout Award Winner
2004 MOWA Clean Waters Award

January 6, 2006

Ms. Rebecca Humphries, Director
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Subject: Request that the State of Michigan Acquire a Portion of the
Pilgrim River Valley

Dear Ms. Humphries:

Enclosed for your review and consideration is a proposal by the Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CCCTU) that the State of Michigan acquire approximately 1,000 acres of the Pilgrim River Valley located two miles from Houghton.

This tract, which has been open to the public for the past century, possesses a wide array of outdoor recreation values as detailed by the enclosure. Although other privately held land in the western Upper Peninsula may have equal or arguably better recreation attributes, the very close proximity of the Pilgrim River to a large, growing urban area greatly enhances the value of the Valley and makes it a unique recreation resource.

The enclosed proposal includes background information, maps, and a more complete explanation of site values. A justification for public acquisition also is presented.

Pressure to urbanize land in and near Houghton, Hancock, and Portage Charter Township is expected to continue and intensify as the region's economy reinvents itself following the decline of the mining industry. While there exist many other tracts that could be developed as part of urban development in the region, reserving the Pilgrim River Valley for recreation clearly is a worthy endeavor.

We look forward to your thoughts and ideas about how we could proceed with this project one way or another and invite you to experience the Pilgrim River Valley is all its splendor next spring.

Very truly yours,

Jim Baker
President
Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited



**ONE
MORE
CAST**

**Newsletter of the
Copper Country Chapter
of Trout Unlimited**

Published quarterly.

Bill Leder, Editor and Publicist

Contributing Writers

(This Issue)

Jim Baker, Don Kreher, Bill Leder

CCCTU

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Stocking the Pond

2005 Summer Fish Camp a Success; Be Sure to Apply for 2006

By Jim Baker

This past summer as in the past, your Chapter supported two area youth to attend the Youth River Conservation and Fishing Camp hosted by the Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The camp is held in lower Michigan at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on Higgins Lake. Five days of fishing and fish related education was included. Attendees learn about fly fishing, spinner fishing, watershed management, and water quality as well as a bit about the history of trout fishing in Michigan and other historical uses of rivers, such as logging.

We received a surprising number of great applications, but after careful consideration and review of the application letters and support letters from their school teachers, the CCCTU Board selected Ryan Gerbig from Lake Linden and Jared Julian from Silver City. In addition to a love of fishing and fish, Ryan and Jared both share an interest in understanding and stewarding natural resources. Their applications cited concerns about the health of local trout populations, interest in careers in the outdoors, and commitment to improving

the outdoors through picking up trash along rivers. Their experience at the camp will hopefully build on their existing enthusiasm and respect for riparian resources to develop them and their fellow campers into the next generation of conservation leaders.

This year's camp is scheduled for July 9-15 and is open to boys and girls ages 12-16. The Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited has two scholarships available for local youth to attend. The scholarship covers the cost of the camp; campers are normally responsible for their own transportation.

For an application to the scholarships for this year's camp, please contact CCCTU Board Member Gale Jamsen (gcjamsen@yahoo.com). For additional information about the camp in general or if you are interested in volunteering at the camp, you can contact camp coordinator Diane Ondersma with the Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited at 1927 Kingston St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, or by email at dondersma@duttonchristianschool.org.

FISH TALES: I'm With You, Dad

By Jim Baker

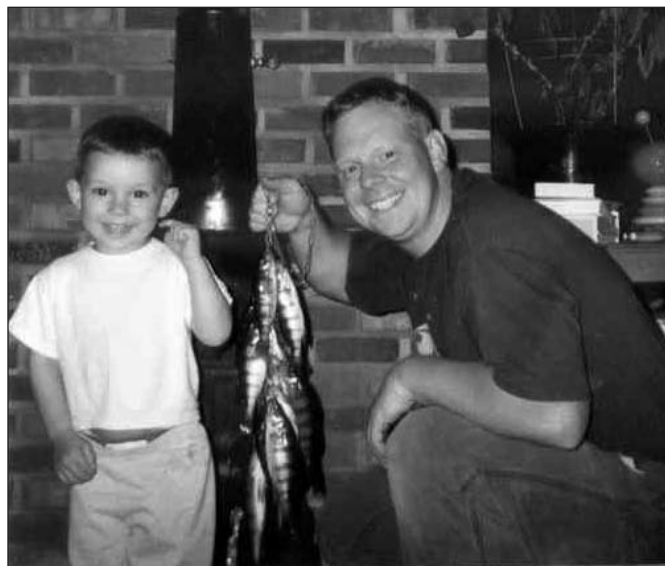
I love to fish. My wife considers it an obsession and there are times that I think she is right. When we decided to start a family we both knew that any children we had would have to join the obsession so Dad could spend family time without going through withdrawal from being away from the water. Our son, Jonathan, was born on the opener of bird season in 2000, and we hit the water for the first time in the winter of 2002. The first time we went, I loaded a pile of snacks with our gear and headed out on the ice in search of perch. Two hours later we still hadn't had a bite but entertained ourselves munching on the snacks, talking about our favorite colors, and playing with the bait. Three hours into it, dusk was upon us and much to Jonathan's dismay, we had to pack up and head home to see Mom, who was probably expecting us for at least a couple hours by then. Jonathan and I have been on a number of other expeditions since then, some more successful and some less. Some times

Jonathan ran out of patience before I did, but many times I had to drag him off the lake, disappointed and dejected that it was over until next time.

For a while I just figured that the fishing bug was genetic, but during one of our more challenging trips last winter, Jonathan stated very plainly what it was really all about. I took a day off work, and after breakfast with Mom and Jonathan's sister Lily, we picked up some minnows and headed north to Copper Harbor to go splake fishing. We went to our usual spot, but the ice looked questionable, so we moved to another area that I was less familiar with. When we found an

area that looked promising, we loaded up the sled to trudge off through the slush and give it a shot. I discovered after walking to our spot that the cover had fallen off our auger, and rubbing on some of our other gear had dulled the blades. I

Continued on page 5

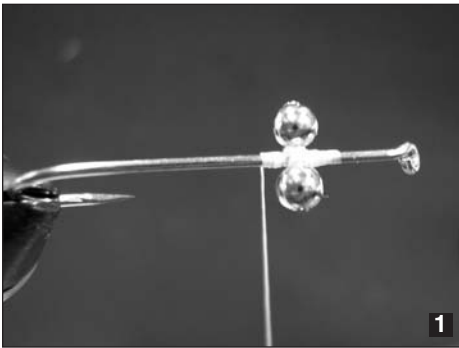


Jonathan and Jim Baker after one of their more successful expeditions for perch on Portage Lake

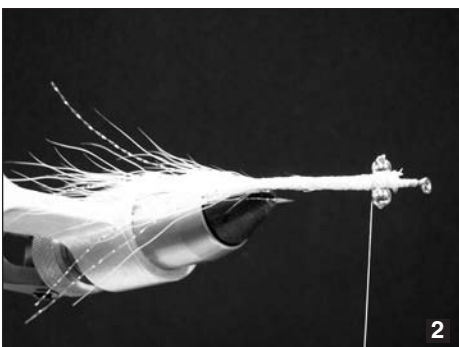
Crappie Candy: It's No Use if it Ain't Chartreuse

By Don Kreher, *The Frugal Fly Tyer*

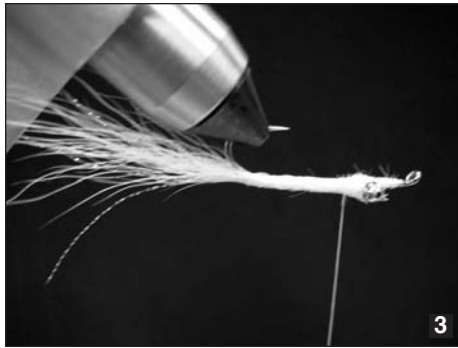
To catch crappie on the fly you need to know where they are and what fly to use. I can help with the latter. My favorite fly for catching crappie is a chartreuse and white Clouser Minnow. The Clouser Minnow is a very effective bait fish imitation and is inexpensive and easy to tie. We use a size 2 to 8 streamer hook, chartreuse bucktail, white bucktail, white thread, pearl crystal flash (optional), and bead chain or dumbbell eyes. Bead chain can be purchased from the hardware store in either silver or brass.



1. Fix the hook in the vice and attach the thread near the eye. Leaving plenty of room for the head, secure the eyes with figure-of-eight thread wraps. I leave about a quarter inch for a size 6 fly. To secure bead chain it is easiest to leave the chain intact. This way you can hold on to it while making the first wraps. Hold the chain parallel to the hook shank, make three tight wraps between the first two beads, release the bobbin, and cut off the two beads with wire cutters. Now make figure-of-eight wraps until the eyes are perpendicular to the hook shank.



2. Take slim bunches of both white and chartreuse bucktail and catch them in behind the eyes. (After cutting the bucktail, I line the two bunches up on the table so that the ends are more or less even before I tie them in. You can use a hair stacker if you prefer.) Now tie in a couple of strands of crystal flash. Double over the crystal flash. Wind the thread in tight open turns down to the start of the hook bend and back up to the eyes. Trim the crystal flash.



3. Figure 3 shows the bottom of the fly, and it should appear mostly white. Put in a couple of half hitches and invert the fly in the vise. You can skip the half hitches if you have a rotary vise.



4. Now take two more equal bunches of white and chartreuse bucktail. Place them together and tie them in at the hook's eye so that their tips are even with the tail. If you put a wrap around the buck tail before securing it to the hook, the buck tail will stay on top and not wrap around the hook.

5. Finish the fly by trimming the but ends of the bucktail and tying it down behind and in front of the eyes



using very tight wraps. Build a neat head, whip finish or use three half hitches. Run a drop of head cement or Super Glue into the thread wraps.



6. Now you're ready to go after some crappie.

Crappie are usually suspended 4 to 5 feet below the surface, eating small bait fish that swim over their heads. Thus, to fish the Clouser Minnow, cast out and let it sink to the appropriate depth, strip the line in slowly, and let the fly sink again. Raise and repeat! To find the sink rate, I stand knee deep in water, drop the fly and count until it hits bottom. My knee is 20 inches so multiplying the count by 3, which tells me how long to wait until the fly drops 5 feet.

Chartreuse and white are the colors I find to be effective in Pike Bay at the Chassel Township Park. This is very stained water. Other color combinations are also effective. All white is a good color for Twin Lakes. Dark brown on top and white on the bottom makes a nice shad. The fly is heavy enough to cast with an ultra-light spinning rod, particularly if you use heavy lead dumbbell eyes instead of the lighter bead chain eyes.

CCCTU Partners with Copper Island Printing to Produce *One More Cast*

By Bill Leder, Newsletter Editor

Do you ever wonder how *One More Cast* is written and produced? I collect ideas about what would make good stories related to local fishing. My goal is to include a variety of topics including community events, CCCTU activities, technical information, humor, and human interest about our members.

I'm especially grateful for the contributions of Steve Albee, who writes the Featured River articles, and Jim Junttila, who covers and writes about outdoor fishing activities in the Keweenaw. *One More Cast* is truly a grass roots effort, and we would like to see many more of our members making contributions to keep our content well balanced. It's your newsletter, so please send me ideas, or better yet, articles or pictures. My email address is bleder@leaelliott.com, you can call me at 482-0158, or we can talk during a Chapter meeting.

Once I've got all the articles and photos for the newsletter, I send them to Marc Norton, owner of Copper Island Printing in Calumet. Marc and I talk about what will go on the front page and in general about how the articles should be laid out. He composes the newsletter and prepares a proof, which I review. Once we're both satisfied with the proof, Marc and his staff print and fold the newsletter. I think his charges are very reasonable.



Marc Norton with Gilmore and Mae

It's your newsletter, so please send me ideas, or better yet, articles or pictures.

Jim Baker, our Chapter president, provides me with address labels based on the official membership roster. Jerri, my wife, places the labels and stamps on the newsletters. Then I take the completed product to the post office, and *One More Cast* shows up in your mailbox in a day or two. Extra copies are available at the general membership meetings. Then it's time to start thinking about the next issue. This is sort of like fishing. When you get home, you start planning your next outing.

Donna Finley, our former secretary, helped with proof reading and did the mailing. I miss her assistance and look forward to the day when we have a secretary again.

The next time you're in Calumet, stop by Marc's shop at 423 Pine Street and thank him for his work on the Chapter's behalf. His two dogs will be excited to see you.

Fish Tales — continued from page 3

personally think that hand augers, on balance, are easier than power augers, but anyone who has used one knows that when the blades get dull you might as well have a pointed stick or a spoon. So after working up a sweat for about a half an hour I had finally cut two holes through the foot and a half of ice and moved the portable shanty into place. When we sat down and cleaned the holes out I discovered that not only were we sitting in four feet of water, but even better, we had a log right across both holes about a foot under the ice. So, after I caught my breath we packed up and headed to look for another spot and the next thirty minute drilling exercise.

After a few hours in our new spot, and two or three more complications including a bucket full of minnows that died on the trip from Houghton to Copper Harbor, a broken fishing pole, and not a single bite, I looked at Jonathan and asked him if he was having fun. Jonathan looked back at me and stated plainly "I'm with you, Dad." At that instant it clicked with me that it doesn't matter if the fish cooperate or not — Jonathan just wanted to get some time out and alone with his old man. Like most children, Jonathan has hit me with some zingers from time to time, but this one comes back to me quite often as a reminder of what is really important, and that we should always be thankful for time with loved ones even if it doesn't seem as pleasant as we would like on the surface.

OP ED

Is it Time to Try Catch and Release in the U.P.?

By Bill Leder

This Op Ed reflects the views of the writer and not necessarily those of CCCTU.

Responsible responses are encouraged and will be published.

My first experience with stream fishing for trout was in Colorado back in 1989. I lived near Denver that year and could see the snow capped mountains from my office window. I fished a lot on weekends. The Colorado Department of Wildlife was a few years into catch and release regulations on gold medal water including the Blue, Roaring Fork, Frying Pan, and legendary South Platte Rivers. Some of the old timers I talked to said that the fishing had improved remarkably. Of course there are many variables and experiments are imperfect when it comes to fisheries, but I sure enjoyed catching and releasing many 12 to 16 inch rainbows and browns.

Later I lived in northern California and again fished mostly catch and release waters, on the Upper Sacramento and the Skagit in British Columbia. Barbless hooks were required, and yes, the conservation officers did check your fly. There was a lot of emphasis on preventing hooking mortality by not playing fish

to exhaustion and keeping them in the water during the release. I learned about turning fish upside down in the net to remove the hook and administering fish resuscitation to reoxygenate their blood supply.

I've been back in the U.P. for three years and am struck by the complete absence of catch and release of any kind. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources recently tightened up the regulations on keeping Coaster Brook Trout. Although a step in the right direction, it's inconceivable to me that keeping any Coasters should be permitted, given their near extinction.

I think it's time to give catch and release a try. I'm not advocating that catch and release regulations be applied to all species or all waters. I enjoy eating a few blue gills or perch just as much as anyone. However, I do think the potential exists for much improved fishing for cold water species with catch and release regulations. Perhaps our winters are too severe and the flows too low to

make a difference, but we won't know unless we try. Why not implement catch and release on one or two of our best streams for a few years and see if it makes a difference? This could enhance the angling experience for us Yoopers as well as bring in new fly fishing Trolls who will spend money here.

But I think there is a deeper reason to support catch and release. Previous generations hunted and fished to survive. Killing and eating wild animals seems to be embedded in the U.P. human psyche. Now we get most of our protein at the grocery store. While there will always be a legitimate basis for taking and eating wild fish and game, perhaps we should embrace a new ethic when it comes to creatures as beautiful as our native brook trout. If we don't, I worry about bankrupting the legacy we will leave for future generations of anglers.



Trout Streams in Winter

By Bill Leder

Hancock — Ever wonder what happens to a trout stream in winter? George Madison, Western UP Fisheries Supervisor with the MDNR, discussed that important topic during the CCCTU General membership meeting on January 12.

George showed a video that documented research performed at Sachsen Creek in Northern California from 1962 to 1978. An underground room with large windows exposed to the water column enabled biologists to make observations below the surface and correlate them with conditions above the surface. It turns out that there are two kinds of ice that are very

harmful to trout, both made clear by the video. Anchor ice builds up above the surface, and when it collapses, it can entrap and kill fish and insects. Frazzle ice forms in the water itself as temperatures reach below freezing levels. This freezing action can kill the eggs of brown and brook trout that spawned in the fall.

Heavy snow cover insulates the stream's water and reduces ice build up. Low flows resulting from drought conditions means that ice forms more easily because the mass of water is more easily frozen. It comes as no surprise that high inflows of groundwater in winter help sustain a trout fishery, just

like they do in summer. George showed maps that indicate that we are indeed fortunate in the UP to have many streams with good groundwater sources.

So, will trout fishing in your favorite stream be good in 2006? We will need to wait and see; but temperature, snow cover, and ground water are important factors.

CCCTU wishes to express its appreciation to George Madison and Brian Gunderman for coming up from Baraga and participating in our January meeting.

Conservation Banquet Coming Soon

Co-Chairs Bill Lehtinen and Jim Junttila report that plans are falling into place for the 7th Annual Conservation Banquet. This is CCCTU's biggest annual opportunity to get together for a good time, great food, and many opportunities to win a raffle or door prize.

When: March 25, with hospitality beginning at 5:00 pm and dinner served at 7:00 pm.

Menu:

Slow cooked roast beef au jus, lemon garlic chicken, parsley buttered red skin potatoes, wild rice, mixed greens salad, fresh vegetables and dip, relish tray, dinner rolls, dessert, coffee, tea, and milk.

Full cash bar.

Where: South Range VFW

Prizes: Rods, reels, float tubes, canoes, camping gear, clothing, outdoor art.

First prize: Canoe and paddles

Second Prize: Round trip for two to Isle Royale

Third Prize: Deluxe fishing gear package

Tickets: Contact Bill Lehtinen at 337-4555, Jim Junttila at 337-1866, or any CCCTU Board Member.

\$30 each; two for \$50

Revenue from this event helps fund fisheries rehabilitation, stream restoration, youth scholarships, and other conservation projects.

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**Copper Country Chapter
Trout Unlimited
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Hancock, Michigan 49930**



CCCTU is Online

Do you want information about meetings, events, or projects? Would you like to read back issues of One More Cast? Are you interested in the Michigan Council of TU or our national parent organization? Do you want to join CCCTU? All this and more is now available online at <http://coppercountrychaptertu.org> It's all just a few keystrokes away, so check it out.

Join Trout Unlimited Today!

To join or renew your membership in Trout Unlimited, including in the Copper Country Chapter, please either:

Go to: www.tu.org and click on the "Join/Renew Tab"

Or send \$35 (single) or \$50 (family) to:

Copper Country Chapter Trout Unlimited

PO Box 232

Hancock, MI 49930

Checks should be made payable to Trout Unlimited, or include credit card information.

Any amount given above regular membership is an additional gift to help Trout Unlimited promote coldwater conservation.

Trout Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and other contributions to TU and the local chapter are tax exempt to the extent allowable by law.

If you have any questions, please contact Gloria Strieter, CCCTU Treasurer, at 906-296-8422, strieter@pasty.com.