

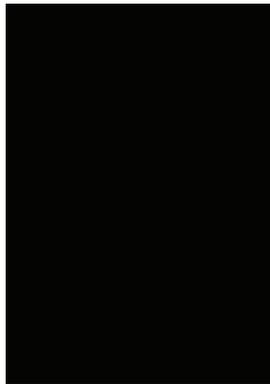
A LOCAL CHAPTER OF  
 AMERICA'S LEADING NONPROFIT  
 COLDWATER FISHERIES  
 CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

THE MERSHON  
**MUDDLER**

◆ *Newsletter of the William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

**Meanders**  
 A few thoughts from  
 the president

**T**his New Year is off to a great start with the very successful January walleye dinner becoming a long-standing tradition. I really enjoyed Steve Sendek's presentation and now have a renewed interest in cold water and why it is such a treasure. I'M SOLD! I want to know more about those waters and the fish below the Mio Dam. The March dinner will soon follow, and I'm already looking forward to another fine evening of fellowship and Steve Stollard's presentation on the Atlantic salmon. Please join us, and bring a youngster. On behalf of the Mershon chapter and our TU efforts, thanks go to John Bumstead and Rich Kemerer, who co-chaired the January event, and Chris Radke and Robb Smith, who are co-chairing the March dinner.



*Dan Keane, president*

Michigan is truly blessed with some unique geology, diverse habitat, and abundant cold water. Is it not the link of these special waters and the glorious trout that form the basis for our treasured cold-water resource? Are these not the same core elements that unite us as we join together to conserve, protect, and restore? It was also this same bond that encouraged the youth education project in St. Charles and the fly tying and fishing classes. My sincere thanks to Jac Ford, Peter Jones, and their assistants, including Carl Hubinger, Scott Woodbury and Joe Bula, for coordinating these activities.

Again, our collective concern for conservation brought us together in February to celebrate a lifetime of commitment with Harold Kleinert and his family. When you spend time with Harold, you quickly learn that he is successful not only because he is sincere and dedicated, but also because he brings people together. Individuals from more than half a dozen groups were there to help celebrate Harold's leadership, his effort, and his success. This is often just what is called for, and is a living example of how we can continue to rise to challenges and work with each other to ensure future success.

*(See Meanders, page 4)*

MAY 2001						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	APRIL 2001					
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
13	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	7	8	9	10	11	12
27	MARCH 2001					
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
15				1	2	3
22	4	5	6	7	8	9
29	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31		

**Calendar of Events**

MARCH WALLEYE DINNER  
**Monday, March 12 ~ 5:00 p.m.**  
 American Legion Hall,  
 5190 Weiss, Saginaw  
 ◆◆◆◆

RIFLE RIVER SUMMER WORK  
 PROJECTS  
**Weekend of July 21<sup>st</sup> or July 28<sup>th</sup>**  
 More details later.

ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISING  
 BANQUET  
**Wednesday, April 25**  
**5:00 p.m.** ~ Hors d'oeuvre & cash bar  
**7:00 p.m.** ~ Family-style dinner  
 Candlelite Banquet Center  
 Bridgeport, MI

# William B. Mershon Chapter Of Trout Unlimited

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Email:  
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Craig Bublitz  
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Bo Brines  
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## Directors

John Bumstead  
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249-6420

Robb Smith  
893-4541

Lindsay Stark  
893-3792

Tom Williams,  
772-1221

## Advisors

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Joe Bula  
781-2047 (H), 776-7245 (W)

Don Check  
799-8039 (H), 752-5129 (W)

David Cozad  
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David Fisher  
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Carl Hubinger  
781-1607 (H), 799-6580 (W)

Peter Jones  
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Harold Kleinert  
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Judy McCann  
652-9869 (H)

Art Neumann  
777-0484 (H)

Bruce Scorsone  
793-7200

Jake Shinnors  
781-3003 (H), 799-5000 (W)

Greg Stansbury  
695-8080 (H/FAX)

Risty Kalivas  
790-8614 (H)

### Editor

Teri Skidmore  
781-0040  
Email: Teriskidz@yahoo.com

Continuing the Mershon chapter's thirty-eight year tradition of quality events, our Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet will be held Wednesday, April 25, 2001. For those afflicted souls who can only conceptualize in relation to major angling events, this is the Wednesday before the traditional trout opener.

You may recall this has frequently been the timing of our banquet in recent years. Well, other things about this year's banquet may seem familiar to you as well...like the location! We are returning to the newly-refurbished Candlelite Banquet Center in Bridgeport, the site of some of our best-attended and most successful fundraisers.

Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will precede a family-style dinner, which will include prime rib and other delicious entrees. Come early to enjoy the camaraderie of your fishing buddies who have missed you over the long, cold, winter. While you're there, you may want to formulate your plan of attack to purchase, win, compete for, and maybe even take home with you some of the thousands of dollars worth of top-notch stuff that is being assembled for the numerous raffles and auctions.

Major raffle items this year include an Orvis Trident TL 904-4 outfit, donated by Little Forks Outfitters, which is a 9-foot 4-piece travel rod for a 4-weight line, and includes a CFO III Disc reel, Wonderline WF-4-F fly line,

100 yds of 20-lb backing, and rod tube. We will also be selling a limited number of chances to win a Beretta Whitewing 20-gauge, over-and-under shotgun. This field grade gun has removable choke tubes, 26" barrels, can handle 3" shells, and has hunting scenes lightly engraved on the side panels.

The live and silent auctions, special card raffles, and bucket raffles will be loaded with quality merchandise from cameras and personal watercraft to clothing and jewelry. Rods by Sage, Orvis, Winston, and Wanigas; reels from Abel, Sage, Orvis, and Scientific Anglers; guided float trips, artwork, flies, tackle, gifts...whew!!! Please remember as you bid for all this wondrous stuff that the funds being raised are designated for the protection and preservation of the cold-water fisheries of the Au Sable and Rifle Rivers—so bid often, and bid heartily.

Several packages have been put together that include not only banquet tickets, but also TU memberships, raffle tickets, and visibility for companies that wish to participate on the corporate level. Please examine these closely in the package descriptions below, as they represent some excellent bargains.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the banquet. It's an evening that shouldn't be missed by anyone who has a passion for our rivers and the trout that inhabit them. And, hey, somebody's gotta go home with all that great new stuff...maybe it will be you! ♦

## 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraising Banquet

*by Bo Brines, banquet co-chair*

*Watch your mail in the coming weeks for your invitation to the 2001 Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet. The invitation will contain more details about the evening, as well as specific instructions for reserving your seat.*

### 2001 Banquet Packages

Bronze Membership Package	Silver Membership Package	Gold Corporate Package	Platinum Corporate Package
<b>\$75.00</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<i>Includes:</i> One banquet ticket One annual membership/renewal Ten bucket raffle tickets One rod raffle ticket	<i>Includes:</i> Two banquet tickets One annual membership/renewal Ten bucket raffle tickets One rod raffle ticket	<i>Includes:</i> Two Banquet Tickets One annual membership/renewal ¼-page display ad in program Framed certificate of appreciation	<i>Includes:</i> Eight banquet tickets w/ reserved table Verbal recognition ½-page display ad in program Framed certificate of appreciation Special rod raffle for platinum corporate package only

## Tie flies to raise funds

by Joe Wolthuis, Mershon chapter member from Au Gres, Michigan.

As a young angler, I often notice how damaged the river system is in which I do most of my fishing. As I look at the eroding banks and littered shorelines, I find myself thinking about ways to make a difference in river conservation. Knowing how much needs to be done, it seems that I can do very little by myself.

A few months ago, I was flipping through an old copy of *Fly Fisherman*, and I ran across an article about a young man who tied a box of flies to help raise money for the local environmental organization. The article gave me a great idea. While I may not be able to do much on my own, I can collect flies from various shops and tiers around the state and auction them off at the Mershon chapter's spring banquet to raise money for our chapter's work on the Rifle River.

In order for this to be a real success, I know I will need a large number of flies. While I have already received flies from some tiers, the more flies we auction off, the more money we will have to put back into the Rifle River. All I am asking for is a half-dozen well-tied flies. If you can't tie flies, would you at least spread the word about this project so that other fly-tiers will know about it?

If you are interested in tying flies, or have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [jwolthuis@hotmail.com](mailto:jwolthuis@hotmail.com), or give me a call at 517-876-8530. ♦

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## Meanders *(cont. from page 1)*

Again, congratulations to you and your family, Harold. I recognize and thank Howard Johnson and the other leaders for the outstanding job of organizing this celebration.

As I conclude my two-year term as president, I must say that it has been a pleasure for me to be involved with Trout Unlimited activities and with the William B. Mershon Chapter. I've really enjoyed these opportunities, and will continue to find specific ways to be of assistance.

I am convinced that it is extremely important that we continue to encourage new ideas and new people to work together on all of our projects. There are many individuals

within our chapter, and other like-minded conservation groups and agencies, that have a sincere desire to support and further common goals. An important part of our challenge is to continue these efforts and, at the same time, to encourage young people to join, learn and participate. If you have been active for a while, give some encouragement and guidance to others that have energy, ideas, and the desire to help.

One final note: Remember to mark your calendar for April 25<sup>th</sup>. Bo Brines and his Spring Banquet Committee are very busy planning and organizing the banquet, which is our largest fundraiser of the year. In addition to coordinating and staffing projects with manpower, the dollars we raise are *extremely* important for

the resource. Again this year, please be generous, as so many of you have been in past years.

Opening day is now only a few short weeks away. I hope you always see the rise, and I look forward to seeing you on the river.

—Dan Keane, president

**B**ecause this is our first appearance in your newsletter, we want to describe our management unit for you, so you'll know where to call if you have questions about your favorite trout water.

The Southern Lake Huron Fisheries Management Unit encompasses most of the 22 counties in east-central Michigan. Our unit extends westward into Mecosta and Montcalm counties, southward into Livingston and Macomb counties, northward into Ogemaw and Iosco counties, and eastward to the Lake Huron shoreline. We also administer Great Lakes fisheries on Lake Huron from Port Huron north to Tawas City, including Saginaw Bay. Needless to say, we keep busy.

If you need information on trout fishing in the Pine, Tobacco, Cedar, Sugar, Au Gres, or Rifle River systems, we are the people to call. We also have a few very small trout streams tributary to the Flint River in Genesee County. We do NOT manage the AuSable River. That system falls within the Northern Lake Huron Fisheries Management Unit, based in Gaylord.

With the exception of the Rifle River mainstem and the open meadow stretch here and there, most of our trout streams are small and brushy, better suited for bait and spinner fishing than for fly-casting. Good populations of brook and brown trout occur in many of these streams, and most are self-sustaining.

Our most important contribution to trout fishing is probably our walleye program. By managing a world-class walleye fishery in Saginaw Bay and its tributaries, we divert tens of thousands of anglers

away from your favorite trout waters!

### ***Work done on the Rifle River system in summer 2000***

The Southern Lake Huron Management Unit dedicated a large part of the summer to doing surveys on some of the tributaries of the west branch and mainstream Rifle River. Little data existed for many of the smaller tributaries. We did one-pass electrofishing surveys for the smaller tributaries, and for some of the larger ones we calculated population estimates.

Of those surveyed, we would characterize the main tributaries to the mainstem of the Rifle—Wilkins, Houghton, Klacking, Gamble, and Prior Creeks—as providing the best waters for brown trout reproduction, nursery area, and holding area, with brown trout ranging from 2 to 22 inches. Houghton, Klacking, and Wilkins also hold a fair number of smaller rainbow trout, generally less than 7 inches. These are probably the result of natural steelhead reproduction. These creeks are generally smaller, with average widths of 15 to 16 feet, and average depths less than 1 foot. In-stream cover, in the form of woody debris, is common. The banks are vegetated with tag alders, and overhead canopy cover is abundant. These tributaries are probably best suited for bait fishing in the deeper pools and holes, although there may be a few open areas where one could use spinners.

N. Eddie, Oyster, Silver, and Vaughn Creeks are all smaller tributaries to the mainstem Rifle. They range in width from 7 to 15 feet, and are generally less than 1 foot deep. They are very brushy. Substrate is mostly sandy with limited pockets of gravel. All but Silver Creek had fair numbers of

*(See Trout notes, page 9)*

## **Trout notes from your local DNR office (Southern Lake Huron Fisheries Management Unit—Bay City)**

*by Kathrin Schrouder, Fisheries  
Biologist, and Jim Baker, Fisheries  
Unit Manager*

*We are delighted to be able to  
provide a current update on the  
survey information developed by  
the Bay City District office. We  
trust you will find this informative,  
and we encourage you to thank  
them for their efforts.*

# Harold Kleinert's lifetime of service to the resources honored

by Howard N. Johnson, project chairman

Over 60 TU chapter members and family members, along with Richard Bowman, Executive Director of the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited, representatives of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Saginaw Bay Resource Conservation & Development Council, the Huron Pines Resource Conservation & Development Council, and the Rifle River Watershed Restoration Committee, joined Harold Kleinert at the Saginaw Club on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, to celebrate and honor him for his many achievements in cold-water conservation.

The early days of Harold's involvement with Trout Unlimited, which led to a partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the forming of the Upper Rifle River Restoration Committee, was presented in chronological order by Howard N. Johnson, past-president of the Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Steve Sendek, fisheries biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Jim Hergott, coordinator of the Saginaw Bay RC&D, and Dan Sikarskie, coordinator of the Huron Pines RC&D, spoke about the alliance that was formed with the Resource Conservation &

Development Council.

Jerry Humpula, chairman of the Saginaw Bay RC&D, and Richard Karsen, chairman of the Huron Pines RC&D, presented Harold with a legislative tribute from Representative Dale Sheltroun's office.

As the Rifle River fishery deteriorated in the years following World War II, the need for an organization like Trout Unlimited became obvious. Harold became a member of Trout Unlimited in 1961, two years after the organization was formed, because he believed in its mission of protecting and preserving the cold-water fishery, as well as its goals, including "catch and release" fishing.

With the newly-formed organization's national office here in Saginaw, it was inevitable that Harold would become involved as a member, practically from the beginning. Harold was invited to join the William B. Mershon chapter's board of director in 1978, and he became president in 1981. During that time, the chapter received its first recognition as "Chapter of the Year" from the Michigan Council of TU. The Mershon chapter became an early advocate of trout stream restoration, and started the Rifle River restoration project, in cooperation with the Martuch chapter in Midland and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

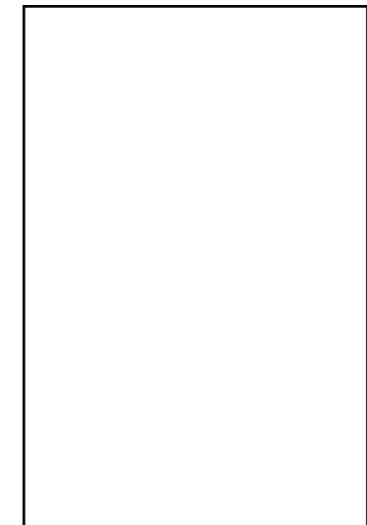
Harold went on to participate on the state council board of directors from 1982 to 1994. He served as the council's financial coordinator from 1988 to 1990.

Harold's wife, Marilyn, is an avid and accomplished fly-fisherwoman, and together they have fished for many species of sport fish throughout the United States,

Canada, Alaska, Argentina, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America.

Harold received the Michigan Council's "Order of the Caddis" in 1996. This honor recognizes the council's most active, effective, and valued member. The following year, the National Office of Trout Unlimited awarded Harold the "Distinguished Service Award." This national award is given for "distinguished service to the national conservation policy." Last year, he received the chapter's initial Howard Woolever Extended Service Award in "recognition of diligent and energetic service."

Harold currently serves as an advisor to the William B. Mershon chapter of Trout Unlimited, and as the co-chairman of the Rifle River Watershed Restoration Committee.



Harold Kleinert, with his wife Marilyn, displays the certificate of appreciation for his lifetime of service to the resources, from the William B. Mershon chapter of Trout Unlimited.

# Rifle River advocate honored

*This article, written by regional reporter Helen Lounsbury, was originally published in the Bay City Times on Wednesday, February 14, 2001.*

**H**arold Kleinert was working to undo the Rifle River's degradation decades before "cussing canoeist" Tim Boomer sullied the stream's image with his arrest there for swearing.

Kleinert's work, of course, has nothing to do with cleaning up foul talk on the Rifle. Rather, the Bay City fly fisherman devoted his life to correcting more insidious abuses inflicted by millions of canoers, tubers and anglers alike.

Today, a half-dozen local, state and national conservation groups honor Kleinert, 78, with lifetime achievement awards at a celebration luncheon in Saginaw.

"It took a real visionary like Harold to open our eyes to how valuable and vulnerable the Rifle River is," said Jim Hergott, Saginaw Bay Resource Conservation and Development project coordinator.

"Without Harold, there wouldn't be any Rifle River resource conservation committee. There wouldn't be habitat restoration and protection. There wouldn't be a watershed management plan. ... He was the person who saw it worth protecting, and never gave up."

Kleinert, retired president of Means Stamping Industries in Saginaw, fell in love with the Rifle as a child. In the 1930s he fly-

fished the cold water stream with his brother, Earl - when bamboo fly rods, silk fly line and catgut leaders were the crude standard.

"I got started on the Rifle because it was so convenient to the Saginaw Valley," Kleinert said of the Ogemaw and Arenac county stream. "And it is good for fly fishing because of its good hatches."

But the Rifle is also among Michigan's most vulnerable river systems for two reasons. Its steep banks and soil type make it "flashy" - prone to devastating erosion because its water level rises and falls so dramatically, stream managers say. Also, the river is the state's most trafficked; no Michigan stream sees more canoers and inner-tube floaters per river mile, state natural resource managers say.

Kleinert saw those realities. For 30 years, he has focused his energy and resources on stabilizing the Rifle to preserve and recover the stream's cold-water fish habitat. He was a central figure, for example, in getting public and private groups, despite their different priorities, working toward that end.

Together they researched and inventoried, for example, the Rifle's severe erosion problems, working thousands of hours on shoestring budgets to plant trees, build rock banks, dig sand traps to gather sediment, build cattle walks and put other technology in place to halt erosion.

The Rifle rates among the top three among Saginaw Bay's 50 or so watersheds for carrying suspended solids, resource managers say. Such erosion destroys insect and fish habitat. Left unchecked, it creates such shallow river beds that the stream warms, making it inhospitable for wildlife such as trout.

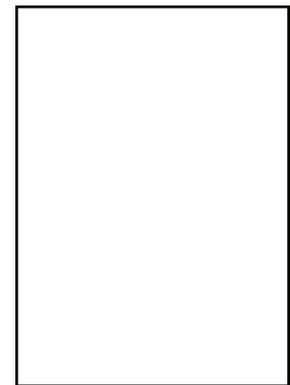
"One of the things that's special about Harold is that though his personal passion is fishing, he worked to reach goals that are much broader than that," Hergott said. "He understands you have to keep all the players at the table happy."

Today members of Trout Unlimited, the Rifle River Watershed Restoration Committee and two federal programs based in Bay City and Grayling respectively - Saginaw Bay and Huron Pines resource conservation and development groups - are among those honoring and awarding Kleinert. Nine of his family members, including three daughters, join the celebration.

Kleinert, for his part, says the attention is unnecessary.

"It really is a labor of love when it comes down to it," Kleinert said. "People who have this disease don't need any kind of recognition. They get it themselves, all the time, by doing what they love. For me, that's seeing something good happen for Mother Nature. That's where I get the credit and honor."

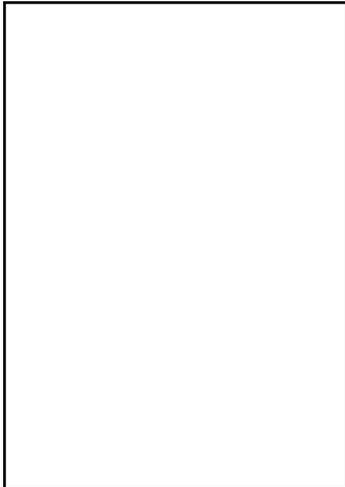
—Helen Lounsbury is a regional reporter for The Times. She can be reached at (800) 727-7661. 2001. Bay City Times. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.



*Harold Kleinert, honoree*

# Profile

**Chris Radke,  
Mershon chapter director**



I am the youngest of 10 children, and was raised in a small, rural town of 1,500 people called Washington, Michigan. I have been an attorney for nine years, and here in Saginaw, with the Firm of Shinners & Cook, since 1995.

Like most of our chapter members, I have had the consistent good fortune to be around people who enjoy the out-of-doors, including: my wife & children, parents, friends, siblings; and now, nieces and nephews who enjoy hiking, fishing, camping, backpacking, skiing, sledding, hunting, cycling, canoeing, and swimming.

The elementary school I attended took a half-day off every Friday that there was snow on the ground, so the students could go downhill skiing. This school also offered several backpacking trips each year, to places like Canada and the Smoky Mountains, for students in fifth grade or above. One teacher would take his class each year to his hometown in the U.P. for a weekend of camping, fishing, and smoking fish. Because this school was located between Oxford and Metamora, and had access to hardwood forests, the students collected and boiled down maple syrup each year.

My earliest exposure to fly fishing was during three summer trips to the finger lakes of upstate New York with our neighbors. At that time, these lakes had many bass, pike, and perch, and we would generally catch decent numbers and sizes of these fish with our spin-casting rods. However, when we were lucky enough to go out on the small boat with my neighbors' grandfather, who only used a fly rod with poppers and streamers, we would inevitably end up watching the biggest fish make the most explosive strikes on his flies. We would watch with appreciation as he

expertly cast his flies under a branch, next to a rock, or just above a sunken log, and the fish immediately hit. He always caught more and higher-quality fish than the rest of us combined. I was quickly convinced that this was the way to fish.

Unfortunately, my technique has not yet advanced to the level of my neighbors' grandfather. However, I am looking forward to a lifetime of trying to achieve that goal, and to taking more than one of the fly-casting classes offered by Mershon chapter directors and former directors Bo Brines, Jac Ford, Walt Avery, Peter Jones, and others.

While my fly-fishing technique needs work, conservation and my respect for the resources have always been something that came naturally. My father never missed an opportunity to remind anyone about how lucky we were to be out on a river, or in the woods, or on a lake.

I continued this tradition when a friend at the University of Michigan told me he was going to Isle Royale with his family and wanted to know if I would teach him to fly-fish. After disclaiming any expertise, I told him that I would take him down to the Huron River, which runs through Ann Arbor, and teach him how to tie a wind-knot, how to tie a fly onto his fly line, and teach him basic casting, if he would listen to my thoughts on conservation and catch-and-release. Well, this friend survived the lecture and the lesson, and even caught a sunfish at the end of the day. Once he caught the fish, I knew he was hooked on fly fishing. I also knew part of the conservation lecture had sunk in by the way he handled the fish. It ended up being a rewarding day for both of us.

*(See Profile, page 9)*

## **Profile** (cont. from page 8)

Because of school, I have been a member of five different chapters of Trout Unlimited since I was 14 or so. I have been impressed with the Mershon chapter's tremendous history and tradition, as well as human resources that can't be found elsewhere. Chapter advisor Art Neumann was one of the prime moving forces in the formation, success, and early expansion of Trout Unlimited. Harold Kleinert has done outstanding work

conserving and improving the Rifle River watershed. Dave Kozad has been instrumental in the development of the Stream Sweep machine. There are many other examples of this chapter's tremendous contributors. In the 13 months that I have been on the board, I've seen donations from members of their time, their sweat, their money, and their business resources.

An equally important characteristic of this chapter is the strong sense of camaraderie and good humor that all of the events and endeavors are

done with. From the January and March walleye dinners, to the April banquet, to the volunteer river restoration projects, to the fly-tying and casting classes, to the many committee and board meetings, and to the preparation of this newsletter, this chapter pulls together a quality effort and has fun doing it!

I plan to continue to use my sweat and my training as an attorney to help TU. My wife Karen and I also look forward to teaching our daughter and son to respect and enjoy the out-of-doors. ♦

## **Trout notes** (cont. from page 5)

brown trout. Silver Creek supported brook trout ranging from 2 to 7 inches. These Creeks would be very difficult to fish with anything other than live bait. The only other tributary surveyed was Skunk Creek, in the Rifle River recreation area. This creek was too warm to support trout, although habitat seemed ideal, and a variety of minnow species were collected.

Similar work was conducted on the tributaries to the West Branch Rifle River, with limited work on the West Branch itself. The West Branch Rifle was surveyed below Flowage Lake at Airport Rd, and upstream at Dam Rd. This was to document if steelhead were successful in traversing the ladder at Flowage Lake. In addition, Ogemaw Creek supported a large number of rainbow trout at West Branch, Grey Rd., and at Ogemaw Springs. There was evidence to support the fact that rainbows did get above Flowage dam, and have reproduced successfully. These sites also had modest populations

of brown trout. Above Flowage Lake, the West Branch Rifle has good gravel substrate, and good in-stream cover. The West Branch, up through the city of West Branch, is fairly open and wide (up to 35 ft). Anglers could fish with a variety of methods, including bait, spinners, or flies. Ogemaw Creek at Grey Rd, up to Ogemaw Springs, is much smaller and more brushy, flowing through cedar swamps. Brown trout, brook trout, and rainbow trout were found at all stations.

Additional survey work was also done in Campbell, Peach, Rifle, and Woods Creeks. These are generally small brushy streams from 7 to 15 feet wide. With the exception of Peach Creek, trout were found in all of them. These do not provide access for anglers, as they are generally very brushy and flow mostly through private property.

During the survey, we recorded data on habitat and substrate, and took in-stream measurements. The results and surveys have not yet been completely reviewed, but trout were found in most tributaries in high numbers.

## **Work Done on tributaries to the Tittabawassee River in 2000**

The Central Lake Michigan Management Unit technicians assisted our unit in surveying several tributaries to the Tittabawassee during the 2000 field season. Most tributaries were small, brushy streams with widths ranging from 7 to 15 feet. The tributaries that supported brook trout included Cooks, Muma, Sugar, Parren, Rau, and Spring Creeks, and the west branch of the Tittabawassee River. Brown trout were found at Perrys, Mansfield, Parren, and Rau Creek, and in the west branch of the Tittabawassee. The only station where no trout were collected was the east branch of the Tittabawassee. The water temperature at this station was 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

The bottom in these streams is mostly sand, but there are small pockets of gravel. They have a large amount of wood debris cover and overhanging canopy cover, mostly from tag alders. They are very difficult to fish and would probably be best suited for bait fishing in the deeper holes. ♦

# Gratiot River coaster brook trout recovery efforts need support from TU chapters and members

*by Ray Weglarz, past-president of the Copper Country chapter of Trout Unlimited.*

**C**oasters are brook trout which spend a large portion of their life cycle in Lake Superior. They can grow very large, and are often measured in pounds rather than inches. They get the name coasters from their affinity to live in near-shore lake habitat. They were once abundant in Lake Superior, and provided a spectacular near-shore sport fishery that attracted anglers from far and wide. Their numbers have been dramatically reduced due to over harvesting by commercial and sport fishing and loss of habitat. In Michigan, remnant populations still exist in the waters of Isle Royale National Park, and in the Salmon Trout River in the Huron Mountain Club. The last strong hold of coaster brook trout in the Nipegon region of Ontario, just east of Thunder Bay.

The Gratiot River is a wild, undeveloped, freestone stream located in Keweenaw County in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula. For the past two years, the Gratiot has been the focus of efforts to reintroduce and study coaster brook trout in western Lake Superior by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Technological University in Houghton (MTU), and the Copper Country chapter of Trout Unlimited (CCCTU). Working cooperatively, these groups planted 29,000 fall fingerling coaster brook trout into the lower Gratiot River in 1999 and 30,000 in September 2000; MDNR plans call for continued CBT plants in the Gratiot for four more years. CCCTU members have been working closely with professor Casey Huckins and graduate students at MTU to conduct research on CBT growth, dispersal, diet, and habitat utilization in the lower Gratiot River and proximate coastal habitat. CCCTU was awarded a TU Embrace-A-Stream (EAS) grant for CBT research in 2000, and the

chapter has applied for continued EAS funding for 2001.

Former chapter president Ray Weglarz recently stated, "The cooperation displayed by MDNR UP fishery managers Steve Scott, Vern Nurenberg, and Ed Baker has been outstanding. Ed Baker, MDNR research biologist, has provided oversight and direction for the research component of the EAS to CCCTU members and Professor Huckins at MTU." Ray added, "We couldn't be more pleased with how well the CBT project has been moving forward. We've had support of Joe McGurrin from TU National and from the Michigan Council as well."

"There are clouds on the horizon," cautions Bill Deephouse, retired MDNR fishery biologist and active member of CCCTU. Bill indicates the future of the coaster brook trout program for the Gratiot is in question. "A major hurdle is protecting the lower river from development. Protecting CBT habitat is critical to the success of the project."

Most of the Gratiot watershed is owned by Lake Superior Land Company (LSLC), a recently acquired subsidiary of International Paper. Recently, the MDNR Natural Resources Trust Fund awarded a grant to Keweenaw County to purchase a 100-acre parcel at the mouth of the Gratiot River from LSLC. Besides being a prime coaster brook trout recovery site, the parcel also contains some of the best agate picking on the south shore of Lake Superior, and great steelhead and Menominee fishing in the spring. Two appraisals value the property around \$550,000. The grant covers 75% of the cost; Keweenaw County must provide the remaining 25% (\$137,500).

MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

All-you-can-eat

## March Walleye Dinner

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2001

American Legion Hall, 5190 Weiss, Saginaw

Cocktails at 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner served at 6:00 p.m.

*Featuring*

**Steven Stallard**

*"A Two Year Journey with the Atlantic Salmon"*

RAFFLE ITEMS: WANIGAS FLY RODS  
*wrapped by Dave Dunn and Mark Fitch*

Tickets are \$12 advance/\$15 at the door/\$8 for 18-and-under

For more information contact:  
Chris Radke at 249-6420  
Robb Smith at 893-3792

"This property has spectacular biological, recreational, and scenic values," says John Griffith, president of the North Woods Conservancy and a TU Life Member. "It contains 4000 feet of Lake Superior frontage, as well as prime riparian habitat." John and the NWC have been working since 1992 to protect the Gratiot watershed and adjacent coastline from development. "This parcel is the key to preserving the whole area. We must help Keweenaw County raise the necessary funds to complete this purchase."

Ray stresses the importance of TU members and chapters supporting this purchase.

"Keweenaw County only has about 2000 year-round residents, and does not have the money to complete the purchase. The deadline for the MDNR NRTF grant of March 31, 2001, is rapidly approaching. We need the support of TU members and chapters to make this happen."

Bill concludes, "This is a very important opportunity for CCCTU and other MCTU chapters and individual TU members to work together on a facet of coaster brook trout recovery that has far reaching implications."

For further information, contact Ray Weglarz ([weglarz@up.net](mailto:weglarz@up.net) or 906-337-2136), John Griffith

([griffith@up.net](mailto:griffith@up.net)), or Bill Deephouse ([riverkpr@up.net](mailto:riverkpr@up.net)).

If you are interested in supporting this project, make your donation payable to:

Copper Country Chapter TU  
Memo: Gratiot River/Lake Superior Coaster Brook Trout Habitat Acquisition Fund

Mail to:

Copper Country Chapter TU  
c/o Raymond Weglarz, President  
Copper Country Chapter TU  
HC2 Box 850

Allouez, MI 4980 \*\*need last digit of zip code.

## Fishing letters

*This is another in a series of letters to appear in the Muddler. Although originally published in 1959, the angling tips and trout lore are as fresh and timely now as the day it was penned.*

**H**i Fellow Angler:  
I usually feel the first trouting urge along about January thaw time. I get by that trying period by cleaning my reels, steaming my flies and rewriting my fishing log. But I can bank on a relapse along about March 1<sup>st</sup> when the first warm winds blow out of the south and take with them what remains of winter's garb. But this second attack calls for more strenuous countermeasures like buying a new rod or dipping suckers or hooking "grass pike" off the back lawn. But when there's no January thaw and the south winds arrive a month late, like this year, there's no advance release of the automatically mounting fishing pressure and it builds up inside you until you swear you can't wait another minute. So saturated is your mind with fishing there's little room for rational thinking. It's just an endless dream of mirror lakes and sparkling streams, of monster fish and limit catches. Your mind wanders, not to fishing the way it is today, but to fishing fifty years ago, to fishing the way Dr. F. G. Richardson knew it, back at the turn of the century. A case in point would be Dr. Richardson's trip to the Au Sable for the first week of the season, 1898. Thanks to Walt Russell of Mt. Pleasant, here is the story of that trip taken from Dr. Richardson's own fishing diary. It begins:

### ***Season of 1898***

Trip to Au Sable: Went to Saginaw Friday morning April 29<sup>th</sup>. From there in company with C. M. Norris went to Grayling, getting there about noon or a little after. Started down the river in canoe between two and three p.m., arriving at Wakely's before supper, paddling the distance (25 miles) in 3 hours 18 minutes, last 9 miles in 18 minutes.

May 1, 1898: Went up to island and

started in not very early. Took 54 before dinner. After dinner started in lower down and fished down to the house taking 63, making in all for May 1<sup>st</sup> - 117.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Started in again at little island with Tom for partner. Took 53 before dinner. After dinner went up to near big club house and fished down to Wakely's. Never saw it rain harder or trout bite faster. Took 66 and 3 after supper. In all - 122.

May 3<sup>rd</sup>: Cold, cloudy and wind blowing a gale. Didn't expect to do much. Went above in forenoon and came in at 11 a.m., it was cold, catching 35. After dinner went below for first time, not going out of sight of house. Got 66 - average large. 6 after supper making in all - 107.

May 4<sup>th</sup>: Went below this a.m. Wind strong and trout bit poorly. Got only 27. For a diversion this p.m. went in search of a small creek 2 miles to the north. Got a dozen more. 7 more after supper, making for May 4<sup>th</sup> - 46.

May 5<sup>th</sup>: Went above. Did not bite much to noon. Got 41. While eating dinner, trout jumped very lively in front of the house. After dinner started in front of house and fished down. Got 51. Average very large. Got 14 after supper. In all May 5<sup>th</sup> - 107. Norris got today - 129.

May 6<sup>th</sup>: Got 101 below.

May 7<sup>th</sup>: Went below taking dinner with us getting 69.

May 8<sup>th</sup>: In forenoon got 36, below house. Went below again in afternoon, got enough to make for May 8<sup>th</sup> - 89.

May 9<sup>th</sup>: Dressed and packed trout

in forenoon. In afternoon I went below and got 54. Norris got 78 above. In the 8 days I took, exclusively with fly – 812 trout. For the first 3 or 4 days, while the water was high and somewhat discolored, the Cahill was the great killing fly. But later, when the water went down and sun came out and water cleared, the Slagle was by far the best fly. The Mounted Coachman, Grizzly King Gray Hackle, with orange and yellow body, were used with some success.

Now, while I'm sure none of us expects to surpass Dr. Richardson's record, I'd bet that, by today's standards, we'll have a real good opening this year. I spoke to Mrs. Frank Bond at Penrod's Cabins, Grayling, over a week ago and she advised me that the snow was gone except for a patch here and there and that while the river was above normal, it was not flooding. All we need is

continued normal weather and a little warm rain to make it perfect. If it works out that way, we'll have cloudy enough water for good bait fishing and spinning, high enough water for good streamer manipulation and warm enough water to produce dry fly hatches. If I were bait fishing, I'd stick strictly to crawlers, not worms. Worms are too small for early season. In spinning, something lively and suited to fast water like the One-O-Six, the Wob-L-Rite and the Andy Reekers, should be tops. In streamers, the Roxy Special series, Royal Coachman Bucktail, Lampkin's Dace and Black Ghost will be the work horses. Just be sure they're weighted. And try, by casting cross stream on a slack line, to make them run downstream. It's the most effective trick I know. If we're fortunate enough to have a dry fly hatch, it will be one of the three flies – the Stone, the Iron Dun or the Borchers's Drake. Regardless, it will be middle-of-the-day fishing with

the hatch starting about 10:30 a.m. and lasting until about 3 p.m. And don't forget nymphs, especially large, weighted patterns like Teboe's Muskrat, the Gray Creeper and the Dark Mossback. Fish them deep in the pools, with a sinking line.

That about winds it up except to wish you all the best of luck and a most enjoyable weekend wherever you go. One final admonition – mind your sporting manners, practice the golden rule and, finally, try limiting your kill instead of killing your limit. ♦

---

## Thank you Bob Johnson and Associates

The William B. Mershon Chapter wishes to thank Mr. Bob Johnson and Bob Johnson and Associates for their generous support of our chapter. For many years, Bob provided a secure storage area for our chapter's important records and supplies.

Bob, on behalf of the chapter, I extend our sincere thanks to you and your organization for your generosity.

—Dan Keane, president

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**Editor's note:** In the Christmas 2000 issue of the *Muddler*, Scott Drake's essay was inadvertently titled "The Magic Pond." The correct title is "The Magic Pool."



# 2000 Rifle River project recap

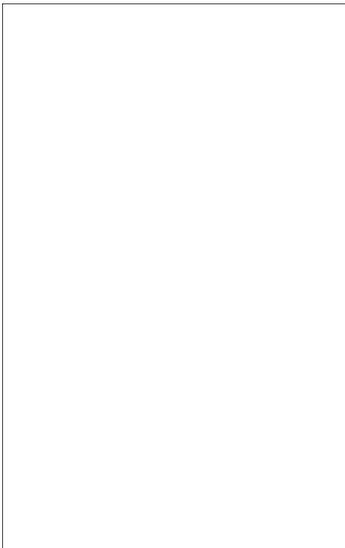
## Eroded Site #27

by Chris Radke, project co-chair

This past year's Mershon chapter Rifle River work project was accomplished by a group of thirty-eight volunteers, beginning the weekend of July 22 & 23, and was completed on August 26.

Like all of the chapter's work projects, this project challenged its volunteers both physically and mentally; required extensive volunteer coordination and cooperation; involved much sweat, camaraderie, and laughter; and ended with each volunteer feeling proud of his accomplishments.

This site proved to be particularly challenging because of its steep slope and soil characteristics. It consisted of a 50' cliff, at a 45-degree angle, made of loose sand that was consistently washing into the river, resulting in lost trout, fry, and aquatic insect habitat.



*Volunteers finish installing the 40-foot chute that was used to deliver field*

The project goals included: placing three large 8' x 4' luncker structures just under the surface of the river to provide cover for large trout; placing partially-submerged field stone on top of the luncker structures to provide habitat for aquatic insects, minnows, and crayfish; and supporting the river's edge and the slope with seeded and netted topsoil.

In 1998, the Rifle River Erosion Site Inventory was completed. It listed over 300 sites on the Rifle River that require treatment. To date, approximately 50 sites have been worked on.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Rifle River system in Ogemaw County, the river flows generally south from Lupton and Rose City, past West Branch and Skidway Lake, where it enters Arenac County. In Arenac County, it begins flowing southeasterly from Alger past Sterling and Omer, eventually flowing into Lake Huron between Standish and Au Gres. The primary interest of the Mershon chapter has involved only the cold water or upper section of the watershed, which contains about 75 sites (not including the tributaries nor the West branch). In this cold-water section, about 50% of the sites have been addressed.

The correction of site #27 took a great deal of hard work for the volunteers. The slope required going up and down the bank by hanging onto ropes. On July 22 & 23, the luncker structures were partially fabricated at the top of the bank and lowered by rope to the water's edge, where they were hydro-jetted and anchored to the river bed. Then, 30 tons of field stone were slid down a chute made of 18" drainage pipe in 20 foot lengths (cut in half to form the chute). The stones were placed

atop the luncker structures and along the river's edge. Other than some assistance from Fair board president, Bill Muzek and his Ford tractor, all work was done by hand.

The first weekend's unofficial theme ended up being MSU vs. UofM because the project designer and supervisor (Mike Thorn) was a graduate of MSU, while the committee co-chairs and many of the volunteers were UofM graduates. By Sunday, only those volunteers wise enough not to have attended one of these two schools remained verbally (but good-naturedly) unscathed.

The final day of the project, Saturday, August 26, was rainy and cold, however, the volunteers were rewarded with the existence of many minnows and crayfish skirting in and out of the stone. The volunteers proceeded to move the ten yards of topsoil from the top of the hill, down the slope on plastic tarps. They then seeded the area and covered it with straw matting. Two weeks later, the grasses had rooted, and the site looked great, except for some bare areas which will require re-seeding and shrub plantings.

For those of you wishing to take advantage of this refurbished site, it is located on the east side of the Rifle River, approximately one-half mile South of M-55 on County Road 19 (Rifle River Trail) at the Ogemaw County fair grounds. Fortunately for the volunteers and those of you wishing to fish this site, it is readily accessible.

During the past three years, the logistics of Rifle River volunteer work projects have become more involved and therefore, more time consuming and costly. Each year, the process consists of:

- reviewing the site
- taking measurements

- recording data
- checking geology and water characteristics
- developing an engineering design, including all accumulated data
- making a 'blueprint' of the site
- making a cost estimate of materials required and number of man hours needed
- obtaining project reviews, comments, and permission from agencies such as MDNR, MDEQ and property owners
- paying for the required state and/or federal permits, which may run into thousands of dollars
- obtaining quotes
- placing orders for materials to be delivered to the work site in time for the project
- determining the equipment required
- lining up sufficient volunteers.

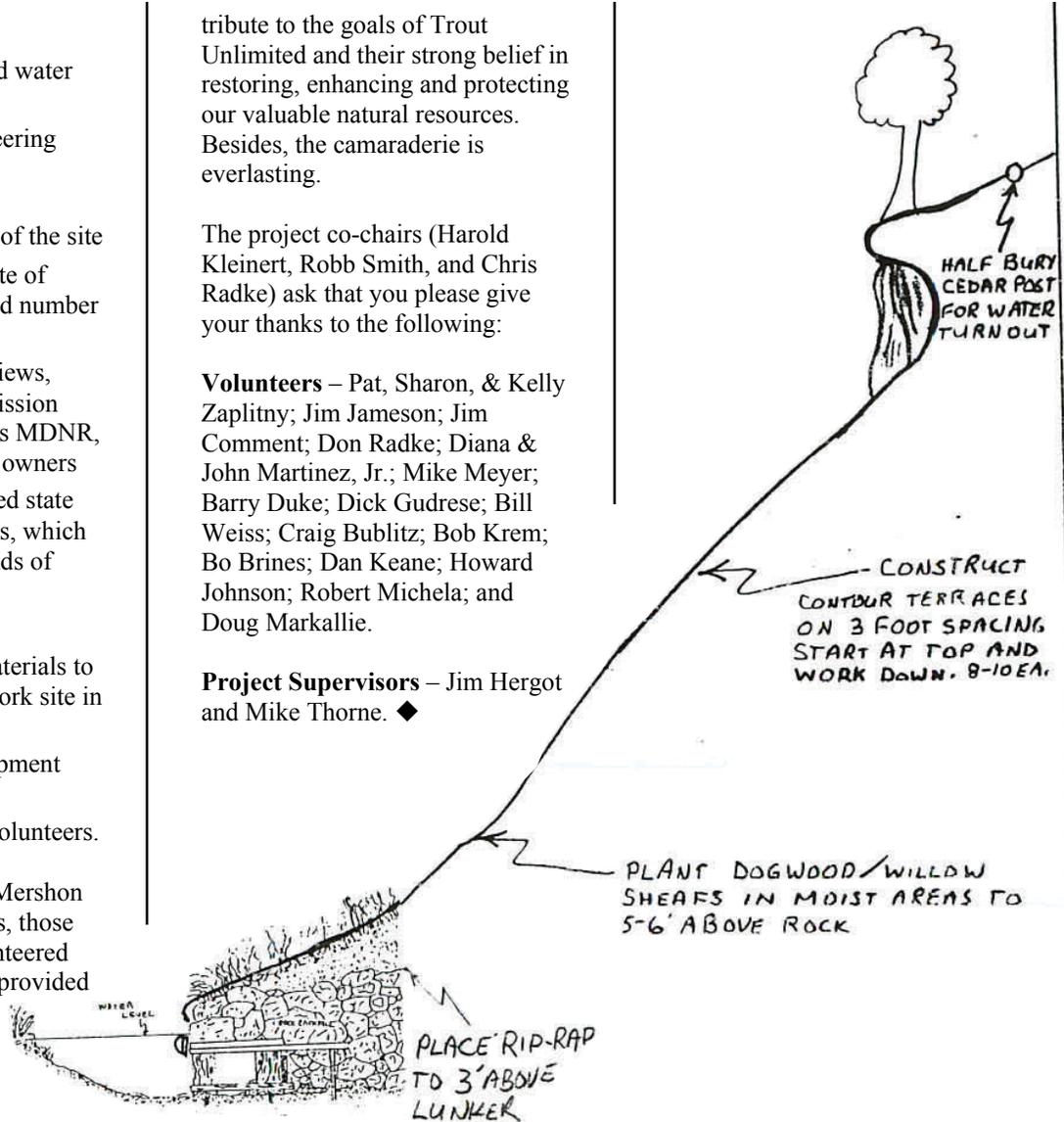
The contributions of the Mershon members and their friends, those who raised funds or volunteered expertise, and those who provided the sweat are all truly a

tribute to the goals of Trout Unlimited and their strong belief in restoring, enhancing and protecting our valuable natural resources. Besides, the camaraderie is everlasting.

The project co-chairs (Harold Kleinert, Robb Smith, and Chris Radke) ask that you please give your thanks to the following:

**Volunteers** – Pat, Sharon, & Kelly Zaplitny; Jim Jameson; Jim Comment; Don Radke; Diana & John Martinez, Jr.; Mike Meyer; Barry Duke; Dick Gudrese; Bill Weiss; Craig Bublitz; Bob Krem; Bo Brines; Dan Keane; Howard Johnson; Robert Michela; and Doug Markallie.

**Project Supervisors** – Jim Hergot and Mike Thorne. ♦



While plans and permits for the 2001 Rifle River project have not been finalized, the project co-chairs anticipate that the project will take place either the weekend of July 21<sup>st</sup> or July 28<sup>th</sup>.

This year the project will consist of two simpler sites, instead of the one difficult site that we did last year. These two proposed sites are just north and south of the Ogemaw County fair grounds,

where the 2000 River Project was held.

If you, your friends, or a group you belong to would like to participate in these beneficial projects, you should contact Chris Radke or Robb Smith at P.O. Box 1555, Saginaw, Michigan 48605-1555, e-mail: [rad8jd4@hotmail.com](mailto:rad8jd4@hotmail.com). ♦

## 2001 Rifle River projects announced

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**YES!** Please begin my one-year introductory membership in Trout Unlimited at the rate I have checked at right. I understand my dues payment entitles me to all regular membership benefits, including a TU decal, personal membership card and quarterly issues of *Trout* magazine with *Action Line*.

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## THE MERSHON MUDDLER

◆ *Newsletter of the William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

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