



## October 2021 President's Message

Fall is here and the trout season is over with in Wisconsin for 2021, but Salmon, Brown and Steelhead have arrived in the Lake Michigan tributaries. So the party is not over yet. The latest information from Wisconsin DNR is that the Root and Milwaukee Rivers have Chinook and Coho and a smattering of Steelhead.

It was a year of larger than normal trout and it may just be due to TUDARE's and the Wisconsin DNR's efforts. My technique certainly did not improve but I think the streams have. Change of regulations and improved habitat are making things better. We will hear more about this in our October and November meetings. This month Jeff Hastings, head of TUDARE, will give us an update on what TUDARE has been doing and projected things we can expect next year. Jeff will also be giving us a preview of the Scientific Symposium in La Crosse. This is a wonderful meeting where fishery scientists and others come together (Feb.1&2 2022) for a day and a half and share their latest information on trout and habitat findings. Our November speaker will be Dave Rowe, Supervisor at the Wisconsin DNR, Fitchburg Wisconsin. Dave will be talking about the DNR's role in improving regulations and trout populations and, a little about which streams have larger fish populations and larger fish. This is a do not miss event.

Speaking of events, the Board has voted to cancel the Christmas Banquet this year because of Covid-19. The decision was made in September because we were not able to predict the course of the virus and did not want to risk infecting anyone. The amount of planning and prize gathering takes some time, so the decision had to be made early with the facts at hand.

Some new business: We have two new people on the board. Scott Lammers is the new Secretary of the chapter. Ralph Lessor will be filling the shoes of Gordon Rudd as Outing Coordinator. Ralph will have some big shoes to fill; Gordon has been at the job a long time and has done a wonderful job over the years. Thanks Gordon from all of us.

Some sad news: we recently lost long time-member and supporter Frank Transue on August 27. Since our outing at White Pines was scheduled on the day of his memorial, the outing was dedicated to Frank.

There were about eight members at White Pines and an eleven-year-old named Harry who is learning to fly fish. He heard about the outing through *Whitetail Fly Tying* and asked if he could join us. Harry brought some of his own very nicely tied flies and caught a couple of trout. Harry

was presented with a rod reel and line that the chapter had received from Maxxon Outfitters through John Psomas. Chapter members worked with Harry throughout the day and his casting distance improved.

Past president Bob Becker has an idea from the West Denver Chapter of TU. They are proposing an exchange of trips, hosting a group of Lee Wulffers on a trip to Colorado in exchange for our hosting a Denver group on a Driftless trip next year. Details are incomplete so far, but Bob will be on the Zoom meeting Thursday to explain more details.

Please take a minute to read the newsletter article by Dick Dragiewicz concerning the Menominee river it deserves our support.

Jerry Sapp

## Lee Wulff TU Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82298939724?pwd=SEVteWFwMHlmMlhlN2VEeTBPM0VGUT09>

Meeting ID: 822 9893 9724

Passcode: 170737

Dial 1 312 626 6799

Join the audio by calling in **or** using the computer audio

Do not use both a phone and the computer audio. Doing that will create feedback distortion

## The Menominee River

(Revised 9/23/2021)

**Want to enjoy some world class smallmouth bass fishing?** If so, your next bass fishing trip should be on the Menominee River. On this trip you'll get to meet some strong hard fighting smallmouth bass.

Where is the Menominee River?



The Menominee River begins about 10 miles northwest of Iron Mountain, Michigan where the Brule, aka Border Brule, and the Michigamme Rivers merge. From here it flows about 114 miles in a southeasterly direction to the Green Bay area of Lake Michigan. The mouth of the river is at the twin cities of Marinette, Wisconsin and Menominee, Michigan. This river is the borderline between the two states.

**Steeped in Native Heritage.** More than 10,000 years ago the five clans of the Menominee Indians (Bear, Eagle, Moose, Crane, and Wolf) were created at the mouth of the Menominee River. Archeological history says wild rice followed them wherever they went. Hence, the name “Menominee” which comes from an Ojibwe Algonquian term that means “wild rice”.

Marinette’s Menekaunee Harbor has a statue of the Menominee Indian Bear that represents this part of the clans.



Originally, the Menominee Indians occupied nearly 10 million acres in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. After a series of treaties in the 1800's and later legislative actions their land area was reduced to 234,000 +/- acres centered around Keshena, Wisconsin. The Wolf River flows through their territory.

Ongoing area archeological studies near the Menominee River have identified historically important agricultural beds, dance rings, burial grounds, etc. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and others are working to protect these sites.

The influence of the Menominee Indians in this area is reflected by the names of governmental entities (counties, cities, townships, etc.) that use the word "Menominee" in their identifications. Marinette is named after a daughter of a Menominee Indian mother. The Menominee River that flows into Lake Michigan at Milwaukee is part of this naming tradition.

**Sturgeon.** For sustenance the Menominee Indians have always fished for sturgeon, so this fish is well known and respected by them. The Menominee River is an excellent spawning area for these enormous fish. Recently government and private organizations completed the \$12,000,000 Lake Sturgeon Passage program. This entailed the construction of an elevator to move sturgeon upstream of the Park Mill Dam and holding tanks that enable the DNR staff to capture and then move sturgeon farther upstream past other dams using water tank trucks.



Yes, you and I can fish the Menominee River for sturgeon on a catch and release basis throughout the year. Sturgeon can be harvested during the month of September. Keepers must be at least sixty inches long and there is a limit of one per person; keepers need to be reported to the DNR.

Here is a link to a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Menominee River [Sturgeon Fishing](#) Story.

**Gearing up for Bass:** Bass fishing anglers use fly rods, spinning rods, casting rods, and there is even a rumor, but no sightings, of an angler that uses a tenkara rod. Options for flies, lures and baits are unlimited. They include Murdich Minnows, Mr. Wiggles, Boogle Bugs, traditional foam poppers, Bad Hair Day and other streamers, weighted crayfish patterns, plastic baits like Zman lures, Senkos, Flukes, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, e.g. Rapala, Berkely Shad, and live bait e.g. nightcrawlers, leeches, minnows.



Murdich Minnow

My personal preference is a 6 weight fly rod for poppers and other light weight patterns. For heavier patterns like weighted crayfish and streamers I like to use an 8 weight fly rod. Medium to medium light spinning rods that are 7 foot or longer work well. Spinning or casting rods come in handy when the wind speed interferes with casting a fly rod or as alternatives to fly rods.

Bass are plentiful and generally range in size from 10” to 20+”. I call those 20” bass “photo quality” trophies. Friends that fish the Menominee River regularly say that catching one or maybe two 20” bass during the summer season is great. However, a couple of friends that fished the Menominee River during the 2020 season reported catching fewer bass but they caught more 20”+ bass. And, as you know, sometimes the bass are smaller.



The Menominee River is best fished from some type of watercraft. The water flow and rocky bottom structure that provides great bass habitat also makes wading challenging. Watercraft also makes it easier to cover more areas of the river. Access to both sides of the river is available from boat launch sites located at highway bridges, the dams, and public parks.



Dave launching his jet sled

Watercraft used here include drift boats, jet sleds, outboard motor powered jon boats, kayaks, canoes, pontoon boats, and float tubes. Shuttle service is easily arranged with your fishing companions. Motor powered boats need to be carefully driven to avoid damage to propellers, etc.

Fishing guide service is available from Tim Landwehr's Tight Lines Fly Shop, Mike Mladenik, my friend Dave Pinczkowski, Northwoods Wilderness Outfitters, and outfitters from Marinette, Menominee, Marquette, and Escanaba locations.

Accommodations are generally available near where the fishing guides are located. For example, Pembine, Wausaukee, Crivitz, Marinette, and Menominee.

**My introduction to the Menominee River** was in the summer of 2006. Got a call from my brother wanting to know if I could arrange a fishing trip for us on the Saturday and Sunday after his upcoming Green Bay, Wisconsin business trip. Told him I'd check it out. Not knowing anything about fishing in or around Green Bay I called my friend Dave Pinczkowski, who I knew on a social basis, and asked for help. Dave immediately responded by saying "let's fish the Menominee River for smallmouth bass". He explained that he'd been fishing and guiding there for many years and knows how to catch these ambitious bass. Booked the trip. After launching his new jet sled at Bear Point and the McAllister bridge sites we experienced some really good smallmouth bass fishing that weekend.

On my drive home I told myself that I should continue fishing the Menominee River. I've fished it almost every season since then.

At the end of the 2007 season, I noticed several signs along the highways we used to access launch sites and in front of river front properties. Signage essentially said "NO MINE" or something similar. Didn't find out what these signs were talking about then. Thought they were strange because I thought that mining in the United States only took place way out West or in the coal mines in and around West Virginia.

In 2008 there were more of these "NO MINE" signs along the river and highways. After contacting Ron and Carol Henriksen, the source of the signs, I arranged to meet them in Oshkosh to learn about the purpose of the signage. They told me that a foreign company wanted to build an open pit metallic sulfide mine right next to Michigan's Menominee River shoreline. A metallic sulfide mine right next to the Menominee River, or anywhere near water sources, would create be an environmental disaster.



Wanting to protect my new smallmouth bass fishing location I offered to help them and their organization, **the Front Forty**, by installing signage, attend and speak at scheduled public

meetings, fundraising, etc. At that time my efforts were entirely selfish because I just wanted to protect this great world class bass fishery.

Since the Back Forty project was first conceived of 20 years ago the opposition has successfully worked to prevent it from being built. [Aquila Resources, Inc., \(Aquila\)](#), the foreign company that wants to build the “Back Forty” project has nothing to show for the \$105,000,000 its already spent. No permits. Litigation losses. Future zoning issues. No money.

However, on September 7, 2021, a Press Release from Aquila said they want to sell the company to [Gold Resource Corporation](#). Due diligence, contract negotiations, etc., are said to be underway. We don’t know what will happen and when. The opposition to the Back Forty will continue to oppose this project until it’s permanently defeated.

Opposition to the proposed Back Forty project is being led by the [Coalition to Save the Menominee River, Inc.](#), the [Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin](#), and Tom Boerner (family owns land contiguous to the north side of the Back Forty site). Plus, many other organizations and thousands of individuals are working with us to keep the Menominee River and Lake Michigan environmentally healthy.

We are determined to prevent the Back Forty from ever being built. Tactics used include public discussions about the adverse environmental issues the Back Forty would bring to this area, challenges to all permit applications with professionally prepared science based reports, and we use strong litigation tactics when necessary.

An example of the opposition’s strength showed up after the Public Hearing and Comment period on one of Aquila’s permit applications. EGLE received 3,400+ comments, only 37 were in favor of the Back Forty, the rest were opposed to it.

Many outdoor based organizations are also opposed to the Back Forty. They include American Rivers, Badger Fly Fishers, Clean Water Action Council, Coalition to Save the Menominee River, DuPage Rivers Fly Tyers, Earthjustice, Fly Fishers International (FFI), Freshwater Future, Front Forty, Great Lakes Council of the FFI, Illinois Smallmouth Alliance, Izaak Walton League, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Environmental Council, Midwest Waters Angling Company, Mining Action Group, Northern Illinois Fly Tyers, Patagonia, Red Cliff Ban of Lake Superior Chippewa, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Sierra Club of Wisconsin, Spartan Sierra Club, The Drake Magazine, Tight Lines Fly Shop, Tom Boerner, Trout Unlimited Chapters and Councils in Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, Western Mining Action Group, Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance, and many more.

Open this link to watch the [River Alliance of Wisconsin](#) video that describes the hazards of metallic sulfide mining.

In summary, my friend Jody's fishing report tells us why we need to protect the Menominee River and Lake Michigan from the proposed Back Forty project.

“So, what is it that we're fighting to protect? In tonight's hour and 45-minute fishing outing, I watched 2 sandhill cranes fish the shoreline, watched a large, immature bald eagle fly overhead, saw 3 deer (1 fawn) swim across the river, seeking greener pastures in Menominee County, watched fish gorging on a huge mayfly hatch, canoed alongside a 4-foot-long sturgeon, and oh yeah, caught and released a spectacular, powerful 17-inch smallmouth bass on a topwater lure. The Menominee is teeming with life, and we're fighting to keep it that way.”

**The Menominee River is asking for your help and financial support. Send your donation to the:**

Coalition to Save the Menominee River, Inc.  
P.O. Box 475  
Marinette, Wisconsin 54143

Or go to the Coalition's website and donate online.  
[www.jointherivercoalition.org](http://www.jointherivercoalition.org)

Contact Dick Dragiewicz at [obiobiobi@ameritech.net](mailto:obiobiobi@ameritech.net) for answers to your questions and more information.

Thank you.

## **Bob Olach's Fly of the Month**

### ***Black Magic Spiders & Peacock Bodied Soft Hackles***

A few weeks ago, I visited the usual Driftless Waters that I've fished for many years. The weather was beautiful, in fact, too beautiful as the temps were in the low 80s and the days were bright and sunny with seldom a cloud to be seen.

I tried all my usual flies including Pink Squirrels, Flashback Pheasant Tail nymphs, Frenchie nymphs, scuds, etc. and even Cracklebacks, but I couldn't get a strike UNTIL I switched to little black and peacock bodied flies.

Here's the dressings that worked for me on those bright and sunny days.



### **Black Magic Spiders**

**Hook:** - Daiichi #1550 wet fly hook (sizes 14 - 18)

**Thread & Body:** - Black Danville 6/0

**Hackle:** - Black Starling or Hen

**Thorax:** - Peacock herl with red wire wraps under the peacock herl



## Peacock Bodied Soft Hackles

Hook – Daiichi #1550 wet fly hook (sizes 12 - 16)

Thread – Red, Balck or Fl. Green Threads - Danville 6/0

Body – Green peacock with gold wire ribbing

Hackle – Grey Partridge or Brown Hen

## Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

"Hey, Curtis, how long is your rod?"

It was an innocent enough question as we all sat around the campfire on the last outing of the year, but after a pregnant pause, Wet Curtis said, "I beg your pardon. Isn't that too personal of a thing to ask?"

"No," I said. "Your rod, the one you fish the most. How long is it? I read this interesting article in the last issue of *Fly Snob*, the article right after the feature on why it is immoral to use strike indicators, and it said the most practical rod is a ten-foot two weight for most fishing because it is sensitive enough to feel like bamboo, long enough for drifting nymphs, better for getting leverage on larger trout, most effective when casting in the wind, and easier at sending tiny dry flies so they settle on the water like real spinners. I'm taking a survey and asking what you think. So how long is your rod?"

"Eight and a half feet, a four weight. But don't you remember that you made fun of me last year when I used a ten-foot Tenkara?"

"That was different. There's no reel. That's like fishing when we were kids with old, bent bamboo poles."

"And it was fun," Curtis said.

"Are you saying size matters?" Ghost Mary said to me and snickered.

"I'm just asking. What about you, Roy? Your background in plumbing has always made you a practical man. How long is your rod?"

"Well, that's an interesting philosophical question. I have several rods to match what I'm trying to do. If I'm just going to snag streamside bushes, then a short rod, eight feet

or less will suffice. But If the stream is lined with willows, then I need a longer rod with more reach to snag branches that high up. I've found that snags in the actual stream, either rocks or roots or sunken logs, may effectively be snagged with rods of any length."

"But I'm asking about catching fish."

"I see. That's a different question. With me, once I catch a fish with any size rod, the trip is a success. Theoretically, it is possible for me to catch two or three I suppose, but that approaches the flaw of greed. When it comes to rods and fishing, I try to avoid being greedy. I'm actually more of a horticulturalist, specializing in trimming streamside fauna than a hunter of animalia."

I had to pause to figure out what he was saying. Then I laughed and Roy smiled.

"What about you, Dewey? How long is your rod?"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know?"

"Well, Grumpy, you've seen the rod I use. I bought it at a yard sale for twenty bucks and all the markings had worn off. I think it used to be nine feet long, but I've broken off the tip several times and glued new tip guides on. I think it's graphite, somewhere between seven and eight feet long. It works for me."

"What about you, Schnoz? What's your preference?"

"My preference is that you quit reading flyfishing articles that just confuse everything. I've seen video of Lee Wulff catching salmon using just the tip section of a rod. I've seen spey casters using twelve-footers in beautiful arcs and 'S' curves in ways I can't do. I think the bottom line is that when it comes to rod length, the fish don't care. I use whatever Huldy gave me for Christmas."

"You're a wise man, Schnoz," I said.

"Wait. Say that again so I can video it on my phone."

"Too late," I said. "I was speaking off the record."

"Rats."

"What about you, Mary?"

"Well, it varies. When I'm fishing with my brother, I use the bamboo rod he made for me. It's smooth and sensitive and makes him feel good to see me using it. I have a ten-foot two weight that works on windy days. Mostly I use an eight-footer my husband gave me, and I find the rod doesn't matter, but learning to cast well does matter. Knowing that a rod was a gift matters. It has meaning that doesn't depend on the length."

"You get to join the Wise Club with me," Schnoz said.

Mary laughed. "You know what Groucho Marx said, Schnoz. 'I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.' It's a joke."

"So we have a consensus," I said. "The choice of a rod is based on yard sales, bush trimming, Christmas gifts, and videos about Lee Wulff. We should write that article as a rebuttal to the Fly Snob magazine."

"Here's the article I'd like to see written," Ghost Mary said. "Times have changed since the famous feud between Frederick Halford and G.E.M. Skues about whether fly fishing must only be done with dry flies or if nymphs were allowed and recommended. I read once that Halford was such an intolerant purist, he said anyone who would abuse the sport by fishing sunken flies on fish that weren't even rising, shouldn't be allowed anywhere near running water, much less trout. When I look around these days, I see some of the nicest people are fly fishers, even when I come upon someone unexpectedly on a stream. I'm amazed at how they share streams, information, and even favorite flies. Golfers don't do that. Tennis players don't do that. I've heard skateboarders do, but they're sort of in a class where they consider themselves outsiders in cahoots. We should write an article about how generous fly fishers are, even kind, for the most part, and then include examples of generosity we've experienced along the way."

"Well, I've been surprised at how often people have shared their best streams, Schnoz said. "Not always, but often. Mary's right. Books share information on how to do it better. Successful fishers often tell what they're using and where they caught fish. You should write that article, Grumpy."

"That's not really an article," I said. "I can't write about something everybody already knows."

"I think you just did," Mary said.

After another long, thoughtful pause, I raised my tumbler in a toast.

## Chapter Officers

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