

Fall Coldwater River Macroinvertebrate Survey Completed

Oak Brook TU (OBTU) members returned to the Coldwater River and tributaries on Saturday October 18 to conduct our second macroinvertebrate survey in 2014. The OBTU chapter conducted its first survey in conjunction with the Coldwater River Watershed Council (CRWC) in May, and will be returning to the same sites annually going forward in the spring and fall. Marv Strauch represents OBTU as a member of the CRWC board.

"This is a great opportunity to pitch in on a valuable data collection program, which will enable the Coldwater River Watershed Council to monitor the effects of their stream improvement projects, mitigation of agricultural run-off, and in general, to better understand the invertebrate populations of the Coldwater River system," said Marv Strauch.

The objective of the study is to develop and document an historical profile of the macroinvertebrate population of the Coldwater River and its tributaries to better understand the cause and effects of human and animal waste pollution due to specific incidents as well as over time. Macroinvertebrates are sensitive to different chemical and physical conditions. If there is a change in the water quality, perhaps because of a pollutant entering the water, or a change in flow downstream of a man-made alteration, then the macroinvertebrate community may also change. Therefore, the richness of a macroinvertebrate community composition in a water body can be used to provide an estimate of water body health.

What's a Macroinvertebrate?

The term macroinvertebrate describes those animals that have no backbone and can be seen with the naked eye. These animals generally include aquatic insects, crustaceans, mollusks, arachnids (joint-legged spider-like insects) and annelids (segmented worms and leeches). Some aquatic macroinvertebrates can be quite large, such as freshwater crayfish. However, most are very small and can only be collected with a fine mesh seine or net. These animals live in the water for all or part of their lives, so their survival is related to the water quality and are significant within the food chain as larger animals such as fish and birds rely on them as a food source.

Popular and familiar macroinvertebrates sampled as part of the October 18 survey included various mayflies, caddis, scuds, stone flies, hellgrammites, aquatic worms and crayfish.

OBTU Volunteers Team Up

Leading the survey team were environmental consultants Khristi Klump and Aaron Sneil who explained the sampling protocol to the OBTU volunteers and assisted with macroinvertebrate identification as part of the audit. OBTU volunteers included Rich Ference Jim Jones, Dave Lunardini, Rick Ralph, Jim Schmiedeskamp, Marv Strauch, Joe Weisenberger, Tom Wilhelm, Phil Young and Stan Zarnowiecki.

Fall Colors, Good Food and an Enjoyable Volunteer Event

OBTU volunteers met at the Tyler Creek Country Club campground, 25 miles southeast of Grand Rapids, at 9:00 AM Saturday, October 18, after either driving up the same day or the evening before. Volunteers couldn't have picked a more spectacular weekend to enjoy Michigan autumn foliage during the 3.5 hour drive from the Chicago area.

After the conclusion of the sampling project, OBTU and area CRWC members were treated to lunch at the Tyler Creek Country Club featuring various grilled and smoked pork shoulders and a keg of one of Michigan's most popular microbrews. In addition to socializing, some OBTU volunteers took advantage of the location and did a little fishing before heading home—while others headed north for the OBTU sponsored Manistee River steelhead fishing trip. (See story on page 3).

"This project was an excellent opportunity for an OBTU volunteer to literally and figuratively get their feet wet," said Tom Wilhelm, an OBTU member for 18 years and first-time participant in the Coldwater River study. "It was a great day to be outdoors and in the water while learning a lot about entomology."

For additional information about OBTU conservation projects, contact Rick Ralph, OBTU Conservation Committee Chair (r.ralph1@comcast.net).

Meetings and Events

Save the date on your calendars

Chapter meetings are at 7:00 PM on the third Wednesday of every month at the Oak Brook Recreation Center, Central Park West building near 31st Street and Jorie Blvd. In Oak Brook, Illinois.

November 19, Wednesday
General Membership Meeting
Presentation by Randy Berndt:
"Fly Fishing in Michigan's U.P."
7-9PM

December 3, Wednesday
Board of Directors Meeting
7-9PM

December 11, Thursday
General Membership Holiday Party
Rock Bottom Brewery,
Warrenville, Illinois
6-9PM

January 14, Wednesday
Board of Directors Meeting
7-9PM

January 21, Wednesday
General Membership Meeting
Presentation TBD
7-9PM



Jim Schmiedeskamp and Tom Wilhelm collect samples on the Coldwater River (left photo) while Stan Zarnowiecki notes the sample location (center photo). Tom Wilhelm separates samples by species and size (right photo).

All Things OBTU...

By Stan Zarnowiecki

Our chapter keeps rolling on with meetings, conservation events, rod raffles, and our December social event. So far, the new (old) meeting location, Central Park West at the Oak Brook Recreation Center is working out great. The September meeting subject was sand strip mining in Wisconsin's driftless area and in October OBTU director Jim Schmiedeskamp gave a great presentation overviewing the membership survey that we completed over the summer including new planned communications programs. November will be our third Fall meeting and we have a fly fishing guide as our guest speaker who will discuss fly fishing in Michigan's U.P. See more information on this page about this topic.

October marked our second return to the Coldwater River in Michigan where we conducted another in-stream invertebrate study. OBTU members started out on Saturday morning on October 18 donning waders and kick nets, looking for anything that crawls in the stream. Our lead story provides in-depth reporting on this conservation program and our back cover features many photos of the event in our new "Oak Brook TU Photo Gallery."

We had a few members head up to the Manistee River for our Fall OBTU organized steelhead outing. We fished the Manistee and the Pere Marquette Rivers and experienced beautiful autumn scenery and some rod bending action. Jim Jones' account of the trip is included in this issue along with a photo of a nice catch.

Rod raffle tickets have been mailed out and we have three great prizes for you to win this year. Please donate to our Chapter through this program. As we learned from our membership survey, most OBTU members were not aware that our chapter receives no funding from your annual national TU membership fees. Since we don't have a major fundraiser this year, your financial support helps us fund our chapter's conservation programs and other initiatives. We will draw the winners at this year's December 11 social event at the Rock Bottom Brewery in Warrenville. This is a great event and one you don't want to miss.

Our board is busy planning future events. Along with our monthly meetings we will be having another spring fishing trip to the driftless area—in Minnesota this time. In May we are planning a fun filled day for fly fishers and friends with a used gear sale, fly tying demonstrations, destinations, fly rod casting instruction for beginners and other activities still in the planning stages. We are helping you with our redesigned email blasts, Facebook page, interactive calendar, and soon to be redesigned web site. Stay tuned...

2015 Spring Event Is in Planning Stage

Start thinking about your used fishing equipment, outer wear and fishing artwork that would be appropriate for the used equipment sale as part of our 2015 spring event—especially if you are "downsizing" or expecting new stuff from Santa this holiday season. We are contemplating three ways to participate in the sale event: 1) reserve your own table for \$20; 2) have OBTU sell equipment and items on a 20% consignment basis; or 3) donate your items to OBTU for resale by the chapter with all proceeds supporting the chapter's operating fund and conservation initiatives. Used equipment, clothing and artwork donations are tax deductible.

If you have items to donate and/or would like to join the planning committee, please contact Jim Schmiedeskamp (JimSchmieds@gmail.com or 312.375.6502).

OBTU News in Review

November 19 Michigan U.P. Fly Fishing Presentation by Randy Berndt

The streams, rivers and lakes of the western Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan will be in the spotlight when Oak Brook TU holds its November chapter meeting on November 19 at 7PM at the Oak Brook Park District Recreation Center. Randy Berndt, owner of the U.P. Fly Angler, will be on hand to discuss this lightly fished area of the Upper Midwest.

"The western U.P. holds many opportunities for anglers," says Berndt. "In addition to fine fishing, the western U.P. offers superb scenery and a chance to fish in solitude."

Randy's presentation will cover how to locate the best waters for brook, rainbow and brown trout fishing, the most successful flies for the area, how to go about planning a trip, and essential safety equipment needed to fish the remote region.

OBTU's Annual Rod Raffle Features Three Great Prizes

Your donation to our annual rod raffle helps fund our Chapter's general operating expenses for the year for monthly meetings, speakers, and various activities.

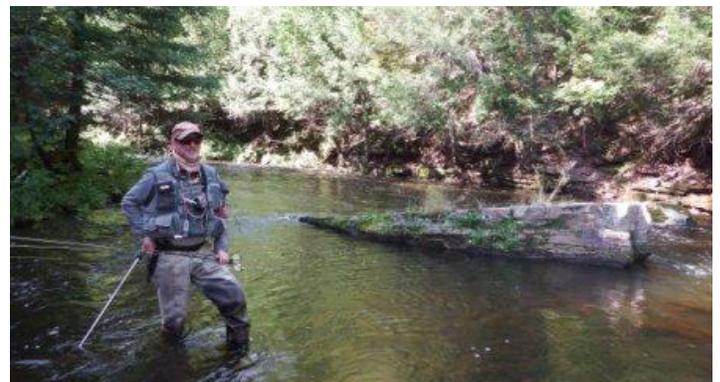
This year, we have three great prizes.

FIRST PRIZE: Eric Heckman, owner of Coren's Rod & Reel, has agreed to be our custom rod maker. Eric will supply his time and talents, and our Chapter will provide rod components up to \$350.00 for a custom rod of your choice. The winner is free to upgrade the rod further at their expense. This is a true custom-built fishing rod by a master craftsman. You can learn more about Eric and Coren's Rod & Reel by viewing their YouTube video.

SECOND PRIZE: Orvis fly rod from the Orvis Yorktown store in Lombard.

THIRD PRIZE: Orvis fly reel from the Orvis Yorktown store in Lombard.

The winning ticket will be drawn at our December Holiday party on Thursday December 11th, at the Rock Bottom Brewery in Warrenville. Drop off your ticket stubs and money in person in lieu of mailing them at our November 19th meeting at the Oak Brook Recreation Center's Park Central West meeting location.



Randy Berndt will discuss the streams, rivers and lakes of Michigan's western Upper Peninsula November 19.

“Crown Jewel” Michigan Moments

By Jim Jones

The state of Michigan is fortunate to have many excellent rivers and streams for fly fishing, but is particularly known for its “crown jewels” which includes the Manistee and Pere Marquette rivers. On this year’s fall chapter trip (October 19-20), we were fortunate to fish both of these “jewels.” These rivers have year round trout fishing along with seasonal runs of steelhead and salmon. While steelhead have their annual spawning runs in the spring, a good number of them follow the salmon from Lake Michigan into these rivers during their fall spawning journey, looking to feed on the millions of eggs deposited into the rivers’ redds or gravel spawning beds.

My companions were Joe Weisenberger and Stan Zarnowiecki, who had participated with me in the Coldwater River macroinvertebrate study on Saturday, October 18. The drive from the Coldwater site southeast of Grand Rapids to Wellston and our accommodations at Schmidt Outfitters put us within easy access to these two rivers. During the drive, we enjoyed the fall colors that were particularly outstanding through the Manistee National Forest.

Joe, Stan and I met our guides early Sunday morning and decided to spend our first day fishing the Manistee River. Because the salmon spawning run was less plentiful compared to last year at this point in the season, the guides’ plan was to “fish the dark runs” behind the gravel beds on the Manistee River where (hopefully) steelhead would be holding. This meant fishing two fly rigs with a lot of weight to get down into these deeper holes. This strategy ended up being more successful than indicator fishing as we usually got at least a subtle take or bump on many of the runs we fished. However, none of these strikes were aggressive enough for any of us to get a solid steelhead hook-up, so our only consolation prize were some small trout.

For our second day, our guides decided that we should try the Pere Marquette. We heard that there were more salmon still spawning there (so more chance of steelhead) and the Pere Marquette also would provide more opportunities for streamer fishing for big fall trout. Also, the Pere Marquette is about a third of the size of the Manistee and would give us a much different experience. We would indicator fish or swing for steelhead on the more intimate and shallower waters. This was also fishing out of drift boats versus the jet boats that we used on the day before. (My guide’s drift boat was a retro model of all wood which was fun to fish from). So, the second day found us on a short drive to the Pere Marquette River where we were among the first boats to hit the river on Monday morning. We rigged up trout

streamer rods and steelhead indicator rods and started “hitting the banks” with our streamers until we reached good holding water for steelhead and then we indicator fished. It was pretty nippy out but as the sun came out and started warming up, we soon started getting action from trout on our streamers. We caught nothing big but had frequent action. As we got farther downstream we saw some salmon spawning and stopped periodically to fish the runs behind the beds. My guide stopped at a nice looking run and I began to indicator fish the run until Stan and Joe came around the corner in their guide’s drift boat. I was just finishing a drift and started swinging the rig to our boat to let them pass when a chrome shape hurtled out of the run and viciously attacked one of my egg “flies.” I set the hook and the next thing we saw was the fresh silver steelhead jumping on the other side of Stan and Joe’s boat. My guide yelled at his buddy for them to row upstream as the steelhead was already into my backing heading downstream. The hen steelhead ran down to the next run where she stopped dead in a deep trough. My guide yelled, “She is “bull dogging” you. Put more pressure on her and make her move”! I did and she took off for several more runs until she tired and we were able to net her. She was a nice 8-pound plus female steelhead and my guide said that she was very “fresh from the lake” as you could tell from her bright chrome color. As the west coast steelheaders say “the tug is the drug” and I certainly felt energized for the rest of the day!

Joe and Stan both had their shots at steelhead but had them break off. My guide said that because of the small size of the river and all the wood and other structure that one needed lots of luck to land a steelhead on the Pere Marquette. He said that even for experienced fly fisherman that a ratio of one fished landed for every four steelhead hooked is about the best one could possibly hope for. So, I felt very fortunate in landing mine that day.

Steelheading has quite a mystique around it and it is not like trout fishing where it is just a question of finding the fish and figuring out what they are eating or they may not be there at all. It is a black art of predicting when the steelhead make their runs from the lake or ocean. So, it is truly hit or miss as the steelhead may not be there in numbers when you are. However, going with other TUers makes this gamble cheaper by being able to share costs and certainly much more fun. Joe, Stan and I enjoyed learning each guide’s approach and picking up techniques even though the numbers hooked were not great this time. We enjoyed the gorgeous fall scenery on two of Michigan’s “crown jewel” rivers during the day and ate very well in the evenings. Who could ask for more?



Jim Jones proudly displays a Pere Marquette fall-run steelhead.



Michigan fall foliage was the perfect backdrop during the mid-October OBTU sponsored steelhead trip.



Joe Weisenberger and Jim Jones team up at the Coldwater River macroinvertebrate study outing.



Tom Wilhelm, Joe Weissenberger and Fred Young were part of the OBTU 10-member volunteer group.



Rich Ference and Marv Strauch



Rich Ference inspects stream material for bugs.



Dave Lunardini takes a sample from the undercut bank of a Coldwater River tributary.



Stan Zarnowiecki joins Jim Jones and Joe Weisenberger.



Michigan fall colors were peaking in time for the Coldwater River outing.



Environmental consultant and project coordinator Khristi Klump



Local Coldwater River Watershed Council volunteer keeps watch on pork and beans.



DuPage River Fly Tyers (DRiFT) were a major sponsor of the November 9 "Early Show."



Oak Brook TU member Wayne Bermahl provides an entomology overview to a young attendee.



Fred Hodge, Oak Brook TU and DRiFT member, shows off his fly tying expertise.

Please contact the following board member regarding volunteer activities or other questions

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Stan Zarnowiecki | Vice President | Officer | vp@obt.org | 708.606.4148 |
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| Joe Weisenberger | Director | Membership | flytie8@yahoo.com | 630.390.9494 |