

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The dog days of summer are here and KVCTU is making the most of them!

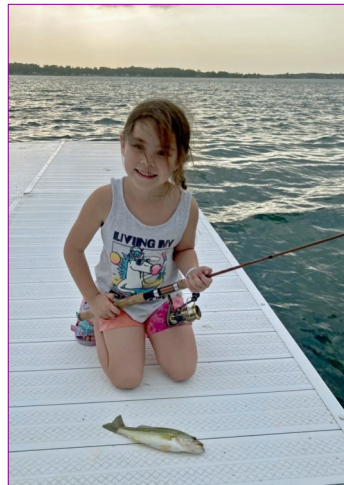
After ending our meeting season with an amazing presentation from Ed Engle, the summer has been jam-packed. Our members have been busy planting trees, observing streams and habitats, and teaching others: Portage Family Fishing Day, Youth Camp, Wa Wa Sum outing, Fly One Kazoo, Fly Fishing 101 class, Damsels Fly class (pew) and I'm sure I'm missing something.

With all these great events and meeting new people, it's going to create a great meeting and event season. Our first meeting of the year will be a cookout at Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery on September 15 at 6pm. There will be raffles and catching up with friends after all the busy summer plans.

We are currently looking for a Stream Projects Committee Chair. We are grateful for all that our committee and our current chairperson have accomplished. Please email me at emilygundlach@kvctu.org to let me know if you're interested.

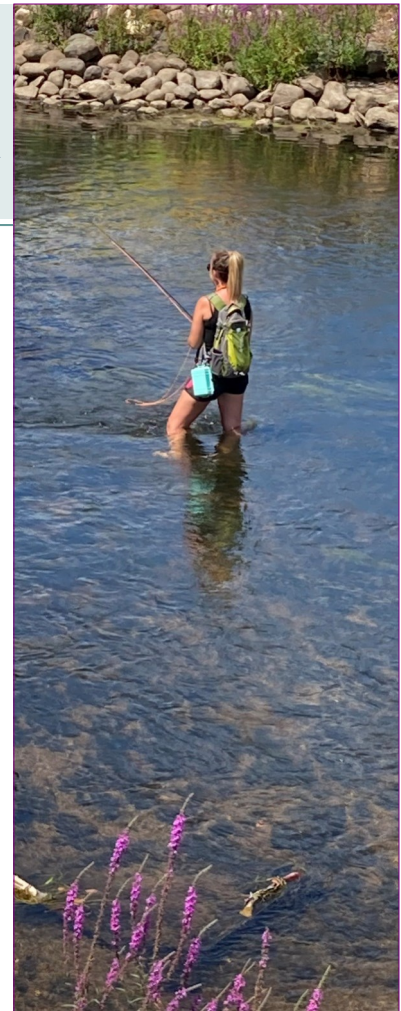
I could not ask for a better board and members than what we have now. Everyone's patience and hard work is priceless.

I would like to personally thank everyone in advance for being part of my village for my two small kiddos. They love being part of KVCTU in their own way, even if it's loud, crazy and wild. I am grateful for all the help and support I have been receiving over these years. Finding a good home/work/life balance is a challenge. With 3 jobs, a household and motherhood, I whole heartedly encourage everyone to find something that brings them joy.



So, keep an eye on our [Facebook](#) and [chapter website](#) for all the news and exciting events to come. It's going to be a great year!

-- Emily



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Our first meeting of the year will be a cookout at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery on **September 15 at 6pm.** Join us for raffles and catching up with friends.



FLY FISHING 101 CLASS

-- Jon Chizmadia

On July 22-23, KVCTU hosted a fly fishing 101 class in partnership with the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery in Mattawan.

The 15 participants spent Friday learning basic fly casting and fly tying. Saturday was an event-filled day covering stream etiquette, reading the water, fly selection, macroinvertebrates, rigging, techniques and — most importantly— fishing on the local Portage River. Most of the participants were able to connect with at least a few fish.

A special thanks to Shana Ramsey and the Wolf Lake staff for allowing us to use their facility, and for their assistance in teaching and tours.

And a big thanks to KVCTU volunteers Greg Potter, John Keagle, Paul Tulgetske, Paul Hammond, Char Hammond, Pete Mathews, TJ Morse, Connie Morse, Tom Morse, Jim Shotwell, and Leroy Heikes.

“ We had so much fun! And we learned a lot too. It was a great class—thank you!

-- Fly Fishing 101 Graduate





The Wa Wa Sum porch. A happy place for our members.

WA WA SUM OUTING

-- Al Henderson

The Michigan State University (MSU) lodge in Grayling known as Wa Wa Sum welcomed members of the KVCTU chapter July 7 through July 10. This year we were originally scheduled for 16 people to attend, but due to suddenly changed plans, injuries and illnesses, only 9 were able to attend.

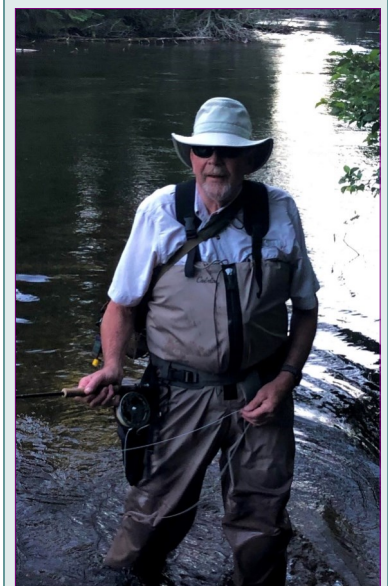
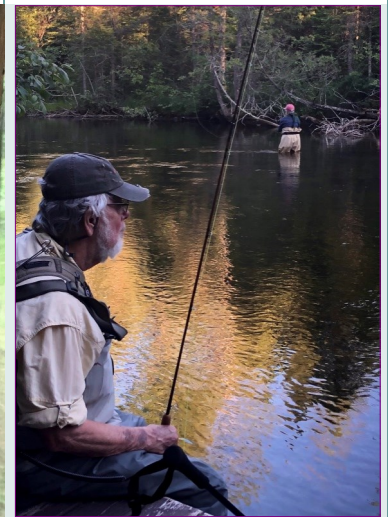
Sadly, two of the lead couples who were to help host this year's Wa Wa Sum retreat couldn't attend: Paul and Char Hammond both came down with Covid (which is awful) but it was even sadder to learn Tom Morse had a crash on his bicycle resulting in multiple broken bones!

Still, those of who did make it to Wa Wa Sum had a wonderful time. As Steve Schullery always says, "fish were caught." But Wa Wa Sum isn't just about time spent fishing the Holy Waters of the Au Sable, it's about time spent with friends. Time was also spent talking and laughing while putting together a puzzle, eating, drinking and rocking on the porch.

This year's John D. Voelker Hour was enlivened by four researchers who were staying in the cabin behind the kitchen/dining hall. There were three graduate students and one was a technician. They were researching turtles and snakes in an area the National Guard is considering expanding their training camp into. Afterwards everyone went to the dining hall for the traditional steak dinner.

MSU is finally relaxing their limits on the number of people in Wa Wa Sum. Last year and this year they required people sleeping in the same rooms to have a family relationship. Hopefully next year the restrictions will be removed.

If you are interested in going to Wa Wa Sum next year come to a KVCTU general meeting during the winter (meetings are always held on the 3rd Thursday evening of the month) and ask a KVCTU Board member for details, or check our website (KVCTU.org).





FLY ONE KAZOO

-- John Keagle

After having to postpone our original Fly One Kazoo date because of high water flow, on July 16 we gathered in Marshall to go through the pre-event rituals: sign documents, review rules, talk up the prospects, and make the last-minute agonizing decision about which fly to use.

Interestingly, there was only one largeish streamer in the mix. Most of the other flies were modest weighted streamers in black and white. Black seemed to rule the day.

The weather forecast called for scattered rain and an overcast sky. A perfect combination for a successful day on the river.

This year we filled up all the available river spots with nine teams signing up. Unfortunately, with the postponement, last minute commitments, and a bicycle crash we lost three teams.

“It was a remarkable smallmouth day. Thirteen smallmouth bass were caught that measured 10” or longer.”

Sam Geerling, now a junior counselor at Trout Camp, returned to the event and teamed up with Tiziano Bonardi. Leroy Heikes was joined by Ransom Traylor. Ransom works in Battle Creek and likes the high active level of KVCTU and wants to become more involved in the club. Laurie and Jack Seibert were first-time participants. Laurie is very active with Trout Camp and is also the president of the Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter in the Bay City/Saginaw area. Teej Morse and Salina Kalnins returned as a team, as well as Greg Potter and myself. Jon Chizmadia and Andy Pokorski, co-chairmen of Trout Camp, recruited camper Zach Zakowski to bolster their team. It was a good choice, because Zach caught a majority of the fish the team logged. This team won the Most Inches of Fish award, recording 160 inches, with 19 fish. All but two were smallmouth bass.

Because of an administrative error by yours truly, we honor two anglers for the Biggest Fish award. Jack Seibert caught a beauty of a smallmouth that measured 14” but regretfully was not recognized at the awards ceremony. A grievous error. Andy Pokorski caught a similar smallmouth of 13” and was recognized.

Andy told of seeing deep water along a log on the opposite shore as he entered the river to fish. Making his first or second cast of the day, the fish took his 4-inch-long fly and ran with it.

What a way to start the day. (It was a remarkable smallmouth day. Thirteen smallmouth bass were caught that measured 10” or longer.)



Andy Pokorski, Zach Zakowski, and Jon Chizmadia show off their Most Inches of Fish Award.

(continued next page)



Andy Pokorski, and Jack Seibert shared the honors for Biggest Fish at Fly One Kazoo.

FLY ONE KAZOO (continued)

On the other end of the ruler, Salina Kalnins turned in a 4” catch. We’re certain her story was thrilling, though she modestly declined to brag.

The awards changed this year from a “keeper” trophy to a “perpetual virtual” trophy, fashioned by the Morse Group. Each winner will receive a framed photograph of themselves holding the new trophies as a keepsake.

The day wrapped itself up with liquid refreshments and pizzas (a treat from Teej Morse and John Keagle) at Dark Horse Brewery. Even though the day has passed us by, we will remember the challenges of preparing and fishing for an amazing freshwater fish, on a beautiful river with friends in solidarity to a sport we all love and honor.



Salina Kalnins with her coveted Fly One Kazoo prize.

SCALIN’ UP FOR SUMMER

In early June, the Portage Dept of Parks and Recreation held Scalin’ Up for Summer. The event encouraged local youth and families to reach outside their comfort zones and explore scaly creatures of the land and water.

Around 400 attended the event, and the first 150 youth to fully complete a fishing passport received a free fishing pole!

The KVCTU booth was one of the required stops for passport completion. Greg Potter, John Keagle, Paul Hammond and Jon Chizmadia helped visitors identify macroinvertebrates collected from nearby Portage Creek, and to understand the importance of insect biodiversity and its relationship to water quality.

Visitors also learned how to build spinners, taking home their very own lure to use on their favorite water.





MICHIGAN YOUTH CONSERVATION & TROUT CAMP

-- Jon Chizmadia

A special thank you to KVCTU members, donors, and volunteers who helped get the June 2022 MI Youth Conservation and Trout Camp back off the ground. After missing the past two years due to pandemic restrictions, this year's Youth Camp was a tremendous success thanks to countless hours of planning and funding by KVCTU members and volunteers.

Camp was once again held at the Ralph A. MacMullan (RAM) Center on the shores of Higgins Lake in Roscommon. In the classroom campers learned about the clean, cold water needs of trout and the importance of protecting these valued resources. They also learned fly tying, spinner making, stream dynamics, invasive species, and the theory behind trout fishing and conservation.

The young anglers then took to the field where they were taught spin and fly fishing techniques, safety and etiquette, and macroinvertebrate identification. They learned (and provided some sweat equity) at this year's habitat improvement project coordinated by Karen Harrison (Mason Griffith) and Steve Sendek (Mason Griffith). Campers installed half-logs to improve gradient and provide necessary spawning gravel on the East Branch of the Au Sable river.

And each day, under guidance of camp counselors, the young anglers had opportunities to test their new skills on famed stretches of the Au Sable River Holy Waters.

The camp highlight was once again coordinated by Howard Johnson (Mershon) on Wednesday evening. Howard worked with some of the finest boat captains on the Au Sable, who volunteered an evening float on an Au Sable River boat that won't be forgotten.



KVCTU's Paul Hammond mentoring Gracie Ridley on the river.

Of the 17 campers that attended this year's camp from chapters across the state, Emma Grace Ridley (Gracie) of South Haven and Zachary Zakowski of South Bend represented our local KVCTU chapter. Both Zach and Gracie are outstanding young anglers. We are eager to see what their future has in store—for them as well as the sport and our organization.



Trout camp is grooming the future stewards of our coldwater resources.

Planning has already begun for the 2023 camp. For more information on MI TU Youth Conservation Camp contact Camp Directors Jon Chizmadia (KVCTU)).



Campers enjoyed an evening floating the Au Sable thanks to the generosity of local boat captains.



Improving trout habitat on the East Branch. A job well done.



Fly tying is always a popular activity.



Junior counselor Sam Greeling oversees the daily gear and wader cleaning.



Memories that won't be forgotten.

MANY THANKS

Counselors traveled from across the state and even country for this year's event. Helping out were:

- Bill Adams (Mershon)
- Jim Bedford (Perrin)
- Alan Brooks (KVCTU)
- Jon Chizmadia (KVCTU)
- Danielle Cole (KVCTU)
- Caswell Evans (KVCTU)
- Zach Gietzel (Perrin)
- Don Meyer (Mershon)
- Connie Morse (KVCTU)
- Tom Morse (KVCTU)
- Andy Pokorski (Clinton Valley)
- Greg Potter (KVCTU)
- Laurie Seibert (Mershon)
- Tyler Keeton (Clinton Valley)
- Paul Hammond (KVCTU)
- Char Hammond (KVCTU)
- John Keagle (KVCTU)
- Kathy Keagle (KVCTU)
- Tim Jacobs (Honorary KVCTU)

A special thanks to junior counselor Sam Greeling (Schrems) who did an outstanding job.

Thank you to all the boat captains, RAM Center staff, Josh Greenburg and Gates Au Sable Lodge staff, Kristen Thomas and crew, stream project coordinators, DNR instructors, bus drivers, donors, and local folks who pitched in.

And a HUGE extra-special thanks to Jon Chizmadia, who, with Andy Pokorski, capably took on the leadership for this year's HUGELY SUCCESSFUL Michigan Youth Conservation & Trout Camp!

DAMSELS FLY

On July 30, 24 Damsels descended upon Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery for a day-long fly fishing course.

They were ready to learn. And more than ready to have fun!

They learned how to gear up, rig a rod, tie a fly, tie on a fly (and tippet, and leader). They were quick studies at casting. They learned about what fish eat, how to approach a stream, read the water, and how to choose and present the flies in their new KVCTU fly boxes.

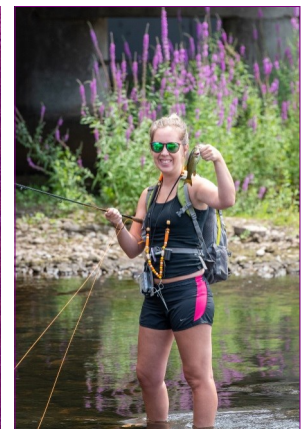
The next day, those who could spent the afternoon using their new skills on the Battle Creek River. We weren't sure they'd ever be ready to get out of the water, but we eventually persuaded them to gather at the local brewpub to cap off a great day.

Hosting the Damsels Fly class takes many hours and many volunteers. We are grateful for all the folks who helped out—donations, tying flies, arranging food, coordinating equipment, preparing, teaching, coaching, loading and unloading And for making it so fun.

It's hard work, but worth it because we're confident this year's Damsels will continue with the sport, and hopefully get involved with their local chapters.



“This course was awesome!! The volunteers were very knowledgeable and friendly sharing their knowledge.”



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- Treasurer—Char Hammond
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- Paul Hammond (Membership)
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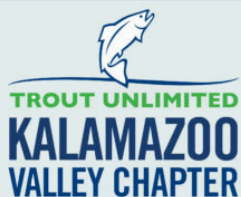
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Contributing to this issue of *Slacklines*: Jon Chizmadia, Emily Gundlach, John Keagle, Connie Morse.
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