

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

# THE MERSHON MUDDLER

◆ *Newsletter of the Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

1989, 1996 & 1997 RECIPIENT OF THE MICHIGAN COUNCIL TU CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

## Meanders

A few thoughts from  
the president  
*Laurie Seibert*



*Laurie Seibert, chapter president*

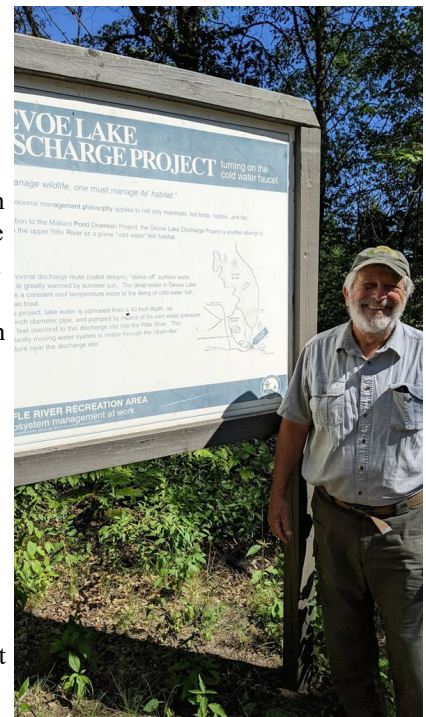
Next to telling me about how great/terrible the fishing was, a topic that comes up often when talking to members is the “we used to” train of thought.

And, we “used to” do a lot! Our chapter, in conjunction with the DNR fisheries division, Huron Pines, and other local conservation organizations, did a heck of a job collecting data in the 80s to discover just what areas needed help to make the Rifle River the best fishery it could be. The data proved the river was warming because of erosion, agricultural run-off, and water flowed through ponds, warming to a temperature not conducive to trout. The Natural River Plan was formed; guiding what can, should, and will be done on the mainstream Rifle and the tributaries north of Omer.

Members of our chapter played a role in 1987 when Gamble Creek was diverted to go around Mallard Pond rather than through it. I have heard stories of taking large equipment into the muck to create this channel; only to need to use dynamite to finish clearing the path. Our chapter, along with members from the Copeland and Martuch chapters, continued the project the next year by reseeding, mulching, and fertilizing the spoil banks along the diversion of Gamble Creek. Water temperatures of the Rifle showed a significant drop that summer.

In the winter of 1988-89 a pipe was placed in the bottom of DeVoe Lake to divert the cold water from the lake bottom into the river. That pipe is still functioning today. I can only imagine the atmosphere of the site; it was quite an investment of time and energy- but look at the pay offs even now.

Our “used to” gives us a lot to live up to. Our previous leaders worked hard; pushed limits. It’s the kind of leadership that made us want to add the word “Heritage” to our name. And that spirit is totally in our grasp now. May 3 we will learn how to take data to complete another Rapid Watershed



*Steve Sendek inspecting the DeVoe Lake discharge. Steve was part of this project.*



(See *Meanders*, page 2)

## *Meanders*, continued from page 1

Assessment like the one that started the significant changes in the 1980s. The costs of doing projects are high, and doing them poorly or without proper planning is even higher. Using data to make the right decisions is critical and we will be a part of that process.

Come to the Family Picnic May 22 at the pavilion at the Auburn Park (in Auburn) to hear Steve Sendek speak about past and future projects on the Rifle. Listen to Billy Keiper talk about the effects of didymo on our rivers. You will feel for yourself the importance of what we're trying to do.

And, while you're thinking about how you want to be a part of all this so someone can use our efforts today as inspiration for the projects they are planning in the future, consider buying a raffle ticket. We use the money we make from these tickets to fund, not only conservation projects, but also for many educational and local activities. We send kids to Michigan Trout Unlimited Trout and Conservation camp, we host fly tying events, we help support statewide projects- but we need your support to continue to fund these projects and activities.

Tickets for a chance to win a Traeger Pro Series 34 Wood Pellet Grill Bronze or a complete Orvis Helios 3D Blackout 5-weight Outfit are \$10.00. If you would like to purchase tickets, please contact us at [mershon-neumanntu@mershon-neumanntu.org](mailto:mershon-neumanntu@mershon-neumanntu.org). The drawing for both prizes will occur at the Family Picnic, May 22 at the Auburn Park. ♦



*Past leaders of the Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter that were instrumental in so many projects.*



*Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter's current Board of Directors and Advisors.*

## Family Picnic

Great Food. Great Speakers.  
Great Community.



The Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter of Trout Unlimited, in collaboration with the Martuch Chapter of Trout Unlimited, will host a family Picnic at the Pavilion at Auburn Park in Auburn, MI on May 22, 2023 from 5:00 - 8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend this free event.

In addition to the fish stories supplied by the attendees, we will be having two relevant speakers: Billy Keiper, EGLE aquatics biologist will speak on didymo: where it's at in Michigan and what we can do. Steve Sendek of Northpointe Fisheries Management will speak on past and future projects on the Rifle River.

Flying Trout Catering will be onsite if you'd like to enjoy any of their signature items: Flank Steak Rice Bowl, Shrimp Quesadilla, French Dip

with Down South Mac and Cheese . . . Check out their website ([www.flyingtroutcatering.com/militaryfieldkitchen](http://www.flyingtroutcatering.com/militaryfieldkitchen)) for an idea of the delicious food in store for us! If you don't see what you're hungry for, you're welcome to bring your own food and drinks.

Raffle drawings for a Orvis Helios 3D Blackout 5-weight Outfit and a Traeger Pro Series 34 Wood Pellet Grill, Bronze will be held as the Mershon-Neumann Chapter's fundraiser. If you are interested in getting tickets for these items, contact [Mershon-NeumannTU@mershon-neumannTU.org](mailto:Mershon-NeumannTU@mershon-neumannTU.org).

Tickets are \$10.00 each. ♦



## A New Partnership with SB-CISMA



You will be seeing our logo in some new places as we join in partnership with SB-CISMA.

Saginaw Bay-Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area is one of 22 CISMAs in Michigan; forming a collaborative community to cooperatively manage environmental and economic impacts of invasive species.

SB-CISMA provides education to the public on invasive species issues and technical assistance for land managers to treat invasive species using economic and environmentally sound best practice management techniques.

Our chapter will join with other private, non-profit, and public organizations to promote the activities of SB-CISMA. By looking at the upcoming events on their website,

Date	Event Name	Location	Time
26 APR	SPRING PARTNER MEETING	GREENPOINT NATURE CENTER SAGINAW, MI	10 AM
29 APR	AIS LANDING BLITZ	LEONARD BOERS III RIVERFRONT PARK SAGINAW, MI	10 AM
2 JUNE	FROG-BIT WORKSHOP	RIVER SIDE PARK AU GRES, MI	5:30 PM
3 JUNE	VOLUNTEER FROG-BIT PULL	(LOCATION TBD, STAY TUNED!) AU GRES, MI	9 AM
10 JUNE	AIS LANDING BLITZ	AU GRES DNR BOAT LAUNCH AU GRES, MI	10 AM
17 JUNE	AIS LANDING BLITZ	CASEVILLE MUNICIPAL HARBOR CASEVILLE, MI	10 AM

For more information visit [sbcisma.com/events](http://sbcisma.com/events)  
Some event dates may change due to inclement weather

[www.sbcisma.com](http://www.sbcisma.com) it is clear our goals align well. Training to remove frog bit, boat washing stations, and treatments to reduce phragmites are all important to the health of the watershed we fish. ♦

## Women n Waders

These women are ready to enjoy some angling!

**G**ather 35 women and 10 volunteers, serve them food, give them prizes, and teach them about fly fishing.....a day made in heaven! And that's the way it was April 8 at the latest Women n Waders event.

Using small groups and stations, participants received hands-on instruction in bugs, knots, casting, where to fish, what equipment to buy, how to tie a fly; the list goes on. By the end of the day they had everything they needed to feel comfortable to fly fish. And just as important as the fly fishing lessons, they meet like minded people and

form networks for future activities; not just fishing. We heard plans for hunting, boating, some other things not for print....

Thank you to the volunteers; your time and energy make this a great event year after year. Thank you also to Scientific Anglers for donation of



prizes, Saginaw Valley Research and Extension Center for providing a wonderful venue, National Trout Unlimited and Bass Pro Shops for the NexGen Grant that provided rods, vices, and other educational materials used; and thank you to the participants that came so far and brought such great energy! ♦



## Things to Look Forward To

*Our chapter will be participating in the following events; we hope you will be there, too.*

May 22, 2023 5:00-8:00 Auburn Pavilion, Auburn Park.....in Auburn!	Family Picnic. In collaboration with the Martuch Chapter	Open to the public- free to attend. Food will be available from Flying Trout Catering Steve Sendek will speak on past and future projects on the Rifle River Billy Keiper will speak on the state of Didymo in Michigan
June 2, 2023 5:30 Riverside Park, Au Gres	Frog Bit Workshop Saginaw Bay Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)	Learn how to identify and properly remove the invasive species, Frog Bit Go to <a href="https://www.sbcisma.com/events.html">https://www.sbcisma.com/events.html</a> for more information
June 3, 2023 8:00-11:00 Haithco County Park, Saginaw	Catch Me If You Can. Saginaw County Parks and Rec	Free First 150 kids registered get a free rod 989-790-5280 to register, or register the day of the event Awards and Prizes
Jul 13, 2023 5:00-8:00 Haithco County Park, Saginaw	4-H Youth Fishing Night	For ages 5 -19 At least one participant must be a member of 4H (free to join- <a href="https://www.canr.msu.edu/4h/join_4_h">https://www.canr.msu.edu/4h/join_4_h</a> ) For more information contact Stacie Gath: <a href="mailto:gathstac@msu.edu">gathstac@msu.edu</a>

## Neumann-Mershon Heritage Fund

The Neumann-Mershon Heritage Fund (the “Fund”) was established in 2019. The charitable purpose of the Fund is stated as follows:

“The recipients of Fund distributions shall primarily be located in the State of Michigan. All applicants and recipients of distributions from the Fund must demonstrate the primary purpose for such request shall be support of coldwater trout fisheries and watersheds in Michigan, including but not limited to habitat improvement, access to trout fisheries, promotion and support of youth interested in such fisheries, educational endeavors, and participation in similar projects by other organizations.”

Since inception the Fund has benefitted from many generous contributions, and has been able to distribute gifts within the guidelines of the Saginaw Community Foundation, the fund administrator, for the purposes stated above. Recipients include the Mershon-Neumann Chapter of TU for work on Gamble Creek, a tributary of the Rifle River, and the Anglers of the Au Sable for stream and habitat improvements on the North Branch.

Many of the donations to the Fund have been made as memorial contributions to honor late family members and trout fishing enthusiasts. The Fund Organizers and Advisors invite you and your families to donate to the Fund. The income tax status of such donations should be considered after consultation with a donor’s tax advisor.

The M-N Chapter of TU and the Fund will be pleased to welcome you to the community of donors to the Neumann-Mershon Heritage Fund. Please address your questions about the Fund to:

Jake Shinnners, [jshinnners@shinnerscook.com](mailto:jshinnners@shinnerscook.com); Robb Smith, [rsmithsr@gmail.com](mailto:rsmithsr@gmail.com); Don Albrecht, [don.albrecht73@gmail.com](mailto:don.albrecht73@gmail.com)

Thank you.

### Editor’s Column

by David Oeming, Muddler editor

For this issue, we are treated with our annual update from April Simmons, our local Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist. Larry Brown, who apparently spends more time thinking than actually practicing streamcraft, manages to illustrate and compare the temporal pleasures of preparing a locally harvested venison feast with mostly imponderable issues of global environmental challenges affecting everyone. Heady stuff for a chapter newsletter, indeed! And our Eveready President Ms. Seibert, reportedly on a ship heading back to the Old Country, has provided useful information about summer ’23 Chapter activities.

I will remind our readers that the Camp Grayling Expansion Proposal (i.e., the plan by the Michigan National Guard to assume control of 250 square miles of public recreational land managed by the DNR “for military purposes”) is still being considered by our Chief Executive, Mrs. Whitmer. Per her recent comments in Cadillac, the Governor states that she thinks Camp Grayling is “unique”, and that (she) “can’t be forced to say” that use of State of Michigan public lands managed by the MDNR should be either for military purposes or for recreation by the public. The Governor stated that her office “is still seeking a solution” that will by its terms approve the request of the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs.

Governor Whitmer’s comments are not consistent with Michigan statutory and constitutional law. I suggest that Muddler readers become informed about this issue (a starting place is the Anglers of the Au Sable website ([www.ausableanglers.org/](http://www.ausableanglers.org/))). A comment – many comments – to readers’ legislators and the Chief Executive would be warranted. This matter should be brought to the attention of every Michigan citizen, not just those residing in counties in the northern third of the Lower Peninsula. There is no “solution”; exclusive public use of vast territories that are proposed to be taken over by Camp Grayling, including portions of the Manistee and Au Sable river systems, is defined and confirmed by law no matter the actions and statements of the Chief Executive. ◆

## Food for Thought

by Larry Brown, chapter board member

Two friends have gathered at a clearing in the woods to camp, fish, hunt, and relax. The fire is carefully built, placing two four-inch logs about six inches apart. The birch bark tinder is placed between the logs, then covered by fine twigs laid perpendicular to the logs. As the pile grows larger, the diameter of the sticks increases. When the pile reaches the size of a bushel basket, the job is complete. Only hardwood is used for fuel. Any sticks of conifer would impart a piney taste to the food. As the fire is lit, the discussion begins.

“Say friend, what do you think of the weather we are having these days?”

“I don't like it, but I don't know what to do about it.”

“Do you blame it on climate change?”

“Sure, but what can you do?”

“Well, let's go back to the beginning by asking a fundamental question. What drove the human race to try to control their surroundings? Was it merely an act of survival? What justifies our actions aimed at harnessing all the forces of nature to suit our own unique purposes? Why must we conquer the wilderness?”

One match lights the tinder and the flames quickly grow into a roaring blaze.

“Keep an eye on the fire, I have to get the rest of the food ready. As it burns down, feed a few more logs into it. We need to have a nice bed of coals for cooking.”

“Alright, I got it.”

Meanwhile, the redskin spuds are scrubbed and quartered. The yellow

onions are peeled and sliced. The whole mess is centered on a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Salt, pepper, and a pat of butter go on top. The corners of the foil are drawn up, the edges folded down, and the ends rolled in, making a fairly air tight, flat envelope.

“Getting back to your comments, we humans have been challenging nature since our arrival eons ago. Fixed point agriculture and animal husbandry are a direct challenge to nature's ways. But without those innovations, we would still be hunter gatherers-grabbing and killing our own food while avoiding some big predators, parasites, and microbes. Many will agree that the environmental cost of growing crops and raising animals for food was well worthwhile.”

“So, you are saying that the benefits of civilization far outweigh the costs? In our quest to control nature, we have beaten back microbes with anti-biotics. We have controlled many viruses with modern vaccines. Modern sanitation methods have saved millions of lives by preventing many deadly plagues and providing safe food and potable drinking water. Yet, we must accept air and water pollution as the price of agricultural and industrial prosperity? We live longer, but not healthier. Increased air, water, and soil pollution have given us higher rates of cancer. An unhealthy diet, rich in sugar, salt, and fat, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, promotes heart disease. Overpopulation and over consumption of natural resources, especially fossil fuels, have given us global warming. Where does this all lead?”

They both return to staring into the flickering flames of the fire. The fire provides not only heat and comfort, but also a primitive form of entertainment carried over from ancient man to the present day. Both agree that people have been staring

into fires for eons. The fire is burning down to form the beginnings of a nice bed of coals. More wood is laid over the embers: hard maple, red oak, and black cherry. It quickly bursts into hot flames of yellow, red, and blue.

“Man, I hope the food is good, because you just gave me an earful. I'll prepare the meat. I brought a nice backstrap of venison taken from a fat, cornfed doe. “

After skinning the carcass, the meat had been cut from the bone, under the utmost of care. The meat had always been kept cool. All silverskin had been removed. It had only been frozen a short time, then thawed slowly. Placing the oblong piece of meat on the cutting board, the backstrap was cut across the grain making round slices about one-half inch thick. The venison wrapped the pieces in plastic. Each piece was pounded with the back of the knife until flattened to one-quarter inch thickness. Each delectable chunk of deer was seasoned with salt, pepper, and basil, before placing the meat into a glass bowl to rest. Adding a dash of olive oil and Worcestershire sauce completed the marinade, and the two returned to their discussion.

“You ask: Where does it lead to? Where it leads is to an examination of our value system. Do we try to evolve a more realistic value system based on common sense or do we continue down our current path? Assuming you accept the premise that global warming is human caused, you can also accept the premise that we can choose a different path. Further assuming that we in fact caused the climate crisis, we also must assume responsibility for preventing widespread damage from it.

(See *Thought*, page 7)

## **Thought**, *continued from page 6*

“Where does one look for this realistic value system? Most major religious texts promote and justify ‘conquering nature.’

Notwithstanding, though, many aboriginal religions adhere to a strong respect for nature. For example, the Native Americans make natural resource management decisions based on the anticipated impact of their decision ‘seven generations’ into the future. How do we reconcile one belief system with the other? Do the beliefs of the past hold the key to the future?”

“Damn, I better make a good salad. My head is spinning. Put some more wood on the fire, and lets’ not forget that our meal won’t make itself.”

The ingredients for the salad are taken from the cooler: romaine lettuce, purple onion, celery, cucumber, green pepper, heirloom tomatoes, kalamata olives, artichoke hearts, feta cheese. The vegetables are prepared with a fisherman’s knife to about the same size and tossed into the wood bowl. Finely chopped fresh parsley, garlic chives, and oregano are sprinkled on top. Pink salt, and black pepper complete the seasoning. Vinegar and olive oil will be added later.

They continue their discussion.

“Indeed, the lessons of the past often help guide us into the future. Most of us wish to lead a long and healthy life doing meaningful work. Why are we forced to accept a polluted planet as the price for our prosperity? Why create an increased risk of cancer and heart disease? How can we reverse, or at least slow, the effects of global warming? Or, why interfere with a natural process? Let humankind run its course, then join the long list of extinct species.”

The fire had burned down to a bed of glowing embers with a scattering of blue flames. They were ready to begin cooking. The coals were leveled off and the spud envelope was laid off to the side, on the coals. The cast iron grate was placed on the bricks on each side of the fire, spanning the space above the coals. The grate would take time to heat up. The spuds began to sizzle. Chilled beverages were opened: dry red wine, dark scotch ale. Soon the grate was ready for grilling. Each piece of meat was drained, then laid carefully on the grate. In about three minutes, one side was seared. Each piece was flipped to sear the other side, and the entire prep and cooking process took less than ten minutes.

The meat was laid to rest on a warm platter. A cast iron skillet was placed on the grate. Into the skillet went butter, sliced onions, fresh mushrooms, salt, pepper, and parsley, and the fragrant mixture received a few quick stirs with a fork. The mushrooms absorbed the butter, and the onions became translucent. The aroma of the spices wafted upward, and dinner was ready.

Conversation resumed.

“Now, where were we? Oh yeah; complex problems can sometimes be affected by simple actions. Many of us have rediscovered the intrinsic pleasure of spending time in a natural environment. If we restore and maintain a healthy environment, we are restored as well. As the mind clears, solutions appear. My suggestions? Promote industry, but not at the expense of the environment. Develop industry only as far as you can, without unraveling the ecosystem. Restore the balance of nature. Promote native species and biodiversity. Cleanse our waterways, restore soil fertility, plant trees instead of grass. Remove unnecessary concrete. Allow vacant land to return to a natural state.

We can and must do better as stewards of the planet.

“Those are all positive yet lofty goals. But what can we do in our own backyards? We could stop mowing our lawns. Instead, we could plant native groundcover and common trees. Perhaps we should eat less domestic meat and consume more plant-based food. We could compost more of our organic kitchen waste. Grow a personal vegetable garden. Use more recycled plastic and metal.”

“In other words, think globally and act locally?”

“Absolutely. Pursue the development of safe, sustainable energy sources and technology that does not threaten our ecosystem. Stop trying to conquer nature. If we sustain nature, then nature will sustain us. Do something for the next seven generations. Renew our affinity and respect for the natural world. If we don’t clean up our act, then nature will.”

“How is your meal?”

“Not bad at all. What’s for dessert?”

“Apricot Upside-down cake with pecans.”

“How do you plan to make that?”

“We can bake it in the fire, using a Dutch oven.”

“First, I’d like some more libation, please.”

“I’ll get right on it.” ♦

### RECOMMENDED READING

“Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World”  
By J.R. McNeill

“Eat Like a Wildman: The Ultimate Game and Fish Cookbook”  
Compiled by Rebecca Gray  
110 years of great ‘Sports Afield’ recipes.

## Spring '23 DNR Report

Eastern Michigan Local Stocking

By: April Simmons

*Fisheries Management Biologist  
Southern Lake Huron Mgmt Unit  
Bay City Service Center, MDNR-  
Fisheries Division*

Anglers far and near are familiar with the beautiful resources that Michigan has to offer. As part of an effort to increase fish diversity and angling opportunities, the Lake Huron Salmon and Trout Management Plan was produced with the goal of “creating a sustainable and diverse salmon and trout fishery that maximizes the lakes production potential to provide exceptional fisheries for communities across the lake.” Between Saginaw Bay ports and tributaries Michigan DNR stocked roughly 2,363,635 Brown Trout (all strains combined) between 1979 – 2011.

Unfortunately, the characteristics of Saginaw Bay, Lake Huron was unable to sustain these stocked fish. Poor survival and low returns to the

recreational fishery led to the discontinuation of Lake Huron port Brown Trout stocking in 2012 and the tributary stockings were ultimately moved farther upstream to create a residential fishery.

Currently SLHMU stocks 15,000 Sturgeon River and 10,000 Wild Rose Brown Trout in the Rifle and East Branch Au Gres Rivers, respectively. These locations are in the upper reaches of the rivers within purpose of creating a resident Brown Trout fishery with some potential strays into Saginaw Bay. In the last two years, we have received several angler reports of lake run BNT being caught primarily out of Tawas and Port Austin with one near Essexville. This is a new trend, though it is likely that anglers have been secretive with their trout catches over the years.

These lake-run Brown Trout have caught the interest of Southern Lake Huron Management Unit (SLHMU) and Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee (LHCFAC). Samples were collected by an avid bay angler for genetic testing to investigate the origin of the fish. Nine fin clips were tested. The origin of the samples

was determined to be Sturgeon River and Gilchrist strain, both of which were stocked in the Rifle River. Unfortunately, the fish were not aged so no further analysis occurred, but it got the ball rolling. As the local fisheries biologist, I am preparing a protocol to conduct a ‘rapid watershed assessment’ of the Rifle River. This protocol will be fluid the first year to ensure we are able to balance our other job duties and to accommodate weather conditions. With the help of TU and other interested volunteers, we will evaluate the fish community (with a focus on trout species), habitat, and water quality at a couple dozen pre-selected sites. As always, I am more than happy to connect with anglers and property owners, but to keep things in order and ensure no one is overlooked - anyone interested in assisting should let Laurie Seibert know. I am looking forward to another year of working with the Trout Unlimited Mershon-Neumann Chapter to protect our coldwater resources and appreciate all of your hard work thus far! ♦





## MERESHON-NEUMANN HERITAGE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED 2022-2023

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The Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter of Trout Unlimited wishes to extend a heart-felt thank you to these businesses and individuals. Their generous support helps to defray the costs associated with distributing this Muddler.



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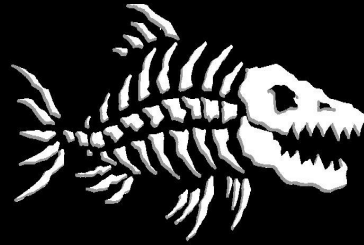
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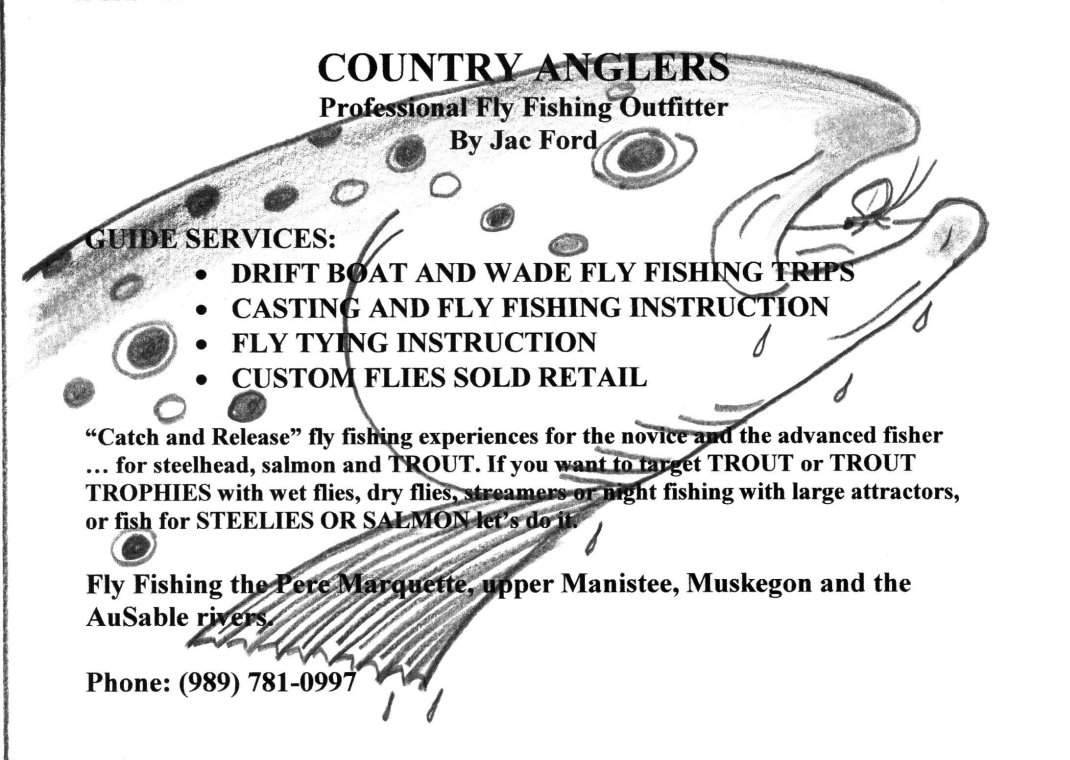
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MERSHON-NEUMANN HERITAGE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING SCHEDULE**

*All Board meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month  
at 5:30 p.m. We usually meet at W.L. Case Funeral Home, 4480 Mackinaw Road, Saginaw.  
However, until it is safe and feasible to meet in-person, we are meeting via Zoom.*

September 6, 2023

October 4, 2023

November 1, 2023

December 6, 2023

—No meetings during summer months—

**We welcome you to attend any of the board meetings.  
Your input is an invaluable resource in our efforts to serve the resources we enjoy.**

**To join our Zoom board meeting, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87838776443>  
or dial in +1 312 626 6799,87838776443#.**