

Trout Unlimited Canada



Northern Lights Fly Fishers



## Welcome to Northern Lights Fly Fishers Newsletter

July 2023 News & Upcoming Events!

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### Dinner and Silent Auction Report

Thanks to the 69 people who attended our dinner and bid on our silent auction items. We raised enough money to fund our operations and programs for another year. Thanks to all of our sponsors who donated prizes, and to the executive who organized the event. We are looking forward to holding another one next year at the beginning of May.



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# Post Event Updates

## **Muir Lake Cleanup**

A dozen volunteers met on Saturday May 13 to clean up around Muir Lake. Not much garbage was picked up but we found that some local residents were doing cleanup throughout the year. After hot dogs some of us went fishing.

## **Kids Can Catch Saturday June 10**

Six volunteers from Northern Lights joined 35 other volunteers from other organizations to help with the Alberta Conservation Association's Kids Can Catch event at Fort Saskatchewan Lion's Pond. Over 460 kids and adults attended the event and most caught perch from the pond. Our volunteers were working as fishing mentors going around the pond and helping kids with casting and fixing line tangles. The ACA is including a fly and bobber setup in their packages that they distribute at their Kids Can Catch events around the province. NLFF donated the flies for this package.

## **Peace County Spring Lake Aeration Project**

Preparation for the surface aeration of the Peace Country's Spring Lake has just started with obtaining quotes for aerators and 600' cables. Since our grant application was submitted last January prices have increased significantly but ACA will be covering those additional costs. Meanwhile Saddle Lake County has been hampered by wildfires in its efforts to get electrical power to the lakeshore but hopefully that can be accomplished soon. We've updated local residents on trout stocking in the area and the plans for Spring Lake via a May 4th article in the Grande Prairie Tribune.

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### Rainbow Park Pond Alum Project

The recent high temperatures are adding to concerns about the ability of trout to survive beyond mid-summer in some stocked ponds due to low dissolved oxygen (DO). NLFF is involved in ACA's Pond Rehab work this year. An experimental project at Rainbow Park Pond near Westlock uses alum to significantly reduce total phosphorus concentration while maintaining favourable water quality for fish and invertebrate survival. The precise amount of alum needed for the volume of water in the pond was determined by ACA biologists and the second of two treatments of the pond was completed on June 20th. Now it's a matter of observation and periodic testing of alkalinity and DO levels into next winter with some trout restocking in the fall. It's expected that winter DO levels will also be significantly increased. Other ponds facing similar problems are being tested for comparison purposes. We've provided an update on the project for local anglers in the Westlock News.

As part of the project we are collecting data on other stocked trout ponds - primarily water temperature and presence of algae. If you have chance to take any temperature readings while out fishing a pond this year please let us know water temp and at what depth (the more the better). location, time of day (approx) and date. Phone Peter at 780-929-2392 or email info to [nlff.tu@gmail.com](mailto:nlff.tu@gmail.com). Any and all info would be much appreciated."

(Photo credit Ken Monk)

### Introducing walleye #35596

Starting last summer, members of the Northern Lights chapter have been angling for walleye in the North Saskatchewan River and recording data as part of a collaborative study with biologists at Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. The goal is to learn more about walleye populations in the Edmonton area. When the team from NLFF catches a walleye, they record the size and location of the fish and inject it with a PIT tag (Passive Integrated Transponder) if it doesn't already have one. The PIT tag is about the size of a grain of rice and is similar to the microchip tags that veterinarians use on cats and dogs. A hand held scanner is used to read the unique identifier on the tag. The study is in flight, but some interesting information has been identified by the team.

Most walleye are recaptured in the same pool where they were initially tagged. There is very little migration of walleye between pools.

There are probably far less walleye in the river than originally thought. Recapture rates are quite high. Walleye #35596 has been caught 7 times already. It was originally tagged on Aug 2 last year and caught 2 more times in August, then again on May 31 (twice that day!) and June 5 and June 6.

There's still lots of work to do, but some of the findings so far are very interesting.

Image of volunteer anglers with a walleye on the North Saskatchewan



# Get Involved!

### Upcoming Programs

We will start meeting in person at Queen Mary Park Community League Hall ([10844-117 Street](#)) again in September, as well as continuing to stream our meetings on Zoom when possible. We will be meeting on the second and 4th Wednesday of the month.



**Our schedule for the fall is:**

- September 13 and 27
- October 11 and 25
- November 8 and 22
- December 13

As always we are looking for program ideas so please send any suggestions to [program@nlft.org](mailto:program@nlft.org)

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# Volunteers Needed!

## Arctic Grayling Project - call for volunteers

Recent fires and flooding in Yellowhead county are making it very difficult to schedule work days in the Upper Pembina. We are still planning to proceed with two initiatives this summer that require volunteer anglers.

On Rat Creek, our goal is to validate the presence of Arctic Grayling in sections of Rat Creek and supplement the inventory of DNA samples. Volunteers will angle for grayling and will collect tissue samples which will be recorded and added to the provincial database. AEPA biologists will not be present, but we will have a research license as this area is closed to public angling. We are targeting July and August and are flexible for weekdays/weekends and volunteers per day. This could be done as a 'blitz' activity with several teams going out on a specific day, or in teams of two or three.

On Dismal Creek (and perhaps other creeks) we will assist AEPA biologists with a volunteer angling survey to evaluate effectiveness of angling closure on the Upper Pembina system. We are looking at 1-3 days; target weeks in July or August, likely weekdays. We would like 1-2 volunteers per day. This is a coordinated activity with AEPA biologists.

Dismal angling sites from July 31 to Aug 11 (**excluding Aug 5,6,7**).

Target is 8 sites in Dismal Creek each requiring a minimum of 6 km of combined bushwhacking and wading.

Please reply to this email if you are interested in helping out or would like to be kept up to date on the angling opportunities. We will only proceed once conditions are safe.



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# Meet Our Members!



I am Eric Vandenberg, and I currently live in Edmonton in the Southgate area. I came to Edmonton in early April of 2023, having previously lived on the west coast of British Columbia in Sechelt. I joined Northern Lights fly fishers shortly after I moved here.

What drew me to join Trout Unlimited was my passion for fish and fish conservation. I have an educational background in biology, and spent a lot of time fishing with my dad growing up. While I lived in BC, I attended a Fisheries and Aquaculture technical program which got me involved in some really interesting work with a variety of fish including the iconic pacific salmon. Now that I am here in Edmonton, I am hoping to learn more about the different fish species in this area, and to build up some volunteer experience toward a career in conservation. I am really excited about the work that Northern Lights Fly Fishers is doing here in Alberta, especially the Arctic Grayling monitoring being carried out in the Pembina river system.

Having recently moved here to Edmonton, my favorite river would definitely have to be the North Saskatchewan river. Not only is the river a beautiful part of the Edmonton scenery, but I'm also really interested in learning about the lake sturgeon populations which I've heard are out in this river. When I was going to school on the west coast, my favourite experiences involved working with the massive white sturgeon which are native to that area (my bio picture includes a to-scale mural of the largest white sturgeon ever caught!). I would really like to catch and work with all of the different sturgeon species across Canada.

I am new to fly fishing, so I don't have a favourite technique yet. I definitely plan to learn more about fly fishing from the many knowledgeable members here at Northern Lights Fly Fishers so I can start casting some flies on the water this summer.

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**Stay tuned to your newsletter for more information about two volunteer angling opportunities in the Upper Pembina coming this summer.**

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