

## Community

### Heart receives 'Golden Net' award

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By BOB RICE

The Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited recently recognized Bill Heart, president of the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited for his significant contributions toward the conservation of cold water fisheries at its winter meeting. At the meeting, held at the Oshkosh Convention Center Heart received the Golden Net Award honoring the efforts of an individual in working towards accomplishment of the goals of Trout Unlimited at the local chapter level.

During the award presentation, Larry Meicher, state council executive board member, called attention to the appreciable list of accomplishments Heart has made during his tenure thus far as President of Wild Rivers chapter. Those efforts include the protection and improvement of the White River fishery by partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in monitoring stream conditions at numerous locations, providing Wild Rivers Chapter funding, and by working on habitat improvement projects on the upper White River.

Heart has also worked collectively with other area conservation groups through the Bad River Watershed Association to protect the wild, undeveloped nature of the lower White. Those efforts ultimately resulted in Governor Doyle's approval of the recommendation by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to designate the section of the river from State Highway 63 to State Highway 13 as appropriate for purchase through the state's Stewardship Fund.

Additionally, Heart has worked with WDNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials and tribal fisheries managers to restore healthy populations of naturally reproducing wild coaster brook trout to Chequamegon Bay shoreline and tributaries. Those efforts have included assisting with population surveys, stocking, and coordinating Trout Unlimited funding and manpower contributions toward habitat improvement projects on Whittlesey Creek and Lenawee Creek in Bayfield County.

Meicher also called attention to Heart's chapter building strength through his work to begin the Wild Rivers Chapter's spring Fishing Expo which has raised over \$10,000 in its first two years. The proceeds from the Expo help the chapter fund White River and coaster brook trout projects. Meicher also highlighted that beyond the stream, Bill donates significant time and money each month writing articles for and printing monthly chapter newsletters, printing the popular "Our Favorite Flies" books written and produced by the Wild Rivers chapter, printing materials utilized by the Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited, and embroidering shirts and hats that promote the Wild Rivers Chapter and Trout Unlimited as an organization. Heart also donates countless hours of his time attending meetings on behalf of Trout Unlimited.

Last year the Wild Rivers chapter was recognized for its significant contributions toward cold water fisheries conservation. This year's presentation of the Golden Net award to Bill Heart shows that the Wisconsin Trout Unlimited State Council is deeply appreciative of the conservation work being done in Northern Wisconsin by Heart and the Wild Rivers chapter. The Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited meets monthly at area locations. Meetings are usually held the third Wednesday of the month from 6-9 p.m. Meeting dates and locations are announced in The Daily Press the week of the meeting. Meetings are always open to the public and are free of charge.

On April 9, the chapter will be hosting its third annual Fishing Expo which raises money to fund ongoing White River and coaster brook trout restoration projects. The Expo features an auction, raffle ticket items, casting demonstrations, and information booths from numerous conservation groups and fisheries agencies and organizations in the area.

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