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## The Myth of the Dry Fly Hero: Its Rise and Fall in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

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[John Gubbins](#)

### Abstract

In 1886 Frederic Halford's book *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* sparked a global shift in fly fishing from sinking flies, wet flies to floating flies, dry flies. The dry fly purist, an angler who fished only dry flies, became a mythic figure, a moneyed, well educated white man, who banded together with other wealthy white men to form exclusive fishing clubs where only upstream dry fly fishing was allowed. Purists spread the myth of the dry fly hero by publishing books and magazine articles extolling their erudition and expertise as anglers.

For a century the heroic myth of the dry fly purist dominated Michigan and Upper Peninsula trout fishing. Its credibility was bolstered by the hatchery raised trout released annually into Michigan lakes, rivers, and streams. The traits enabling trout to thrive in fish hatcheries were the same traits which made them peculiarly vulnerable to dry fly fishing. Hatchery raised trout preferred to forage on or near the surface; they lacked wariness ignoring the presence of predators; and they remained exposed in the upper reaches of the water column during surface disturbance events.

Over the last few decades, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources changed its stocking policies, propagating and releasing fewer and fewer hatchery trout into Upper Peninsula waters. With fewer hatchery raised trout swimming Michigan trout waters, the mythic dry fly purist is becoming a less effective angler thereby losing his grip on anglers' imaginations and so his place in fishing literature.

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This grand road trip through the Upper Peninsula of Michigan will reveal not only the best waterfalls in Michigan, but a series of hiking trails and natural experiences along Lake Superior. Michigan is one of the most lushly forested and scenic states in the nation. Since it boasts four seasons and an equally diverse terrain, there's no end to the beauty of a Michigan-centric experience. The North Country National Scenic Trail in Lowell is just a quarter of the 4,600 mile path, but with 1,150 miles in the state of Michigan you'll see everything from vast views of Lake Superior to miles spend in the cool quiet of the woods. Greenstone Ridge Trail in Isle Royale State Park is considered a difficult train, and interestingly enough the national park itself is the least visited park i... From Tahquamenon Falls State Park to Sugarloaf Mountain, these are the 13 best hikes on the Upper Peninsula. Probably the most majestic of Michigan's waterfalls and one of the largest falls east of the Mississippi, the Upper Tahquamenon Falls drop nearly 50 feet and are more than 200 feet across. A quarter-mile paved pathway leads to the Upper Falls from a parking lot, but there is a 4-mile hiking trail along the Tahquamenon River to the Lower Falls for those looking for a bit more outdoor adventure. There are a total of 25 miles of hiking trails throughout the 52,000 acres of wilderness in this state park. Sign up here for our daily Thrillist email, get Next Flight Out for more travel coverage,