

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited February 2004

Changing Times

Editorial by Jonathan Jacobs

For three decades one of Kiap-TU-Wish's great strengths was its ability to deliver volunteer hours to the Department of Natural Resources, primarily to assist in winter brushing projects. We were great at it and we had a great run. However, circumstances change with the years and we must adapt and change as well or be left behind. Things began to change at an accelerated pace in the mid-1990s when a dispute over permitting arose between the Wisconsin Department of Administration and a local township. The township insisted that the State of Wisconsin apply for permits before undertaking brushing projects; the DOA insisted that it had primacy and needn't apply for permits. A stalemate ensued. In that time, our organizational structure for brushing projects went dormant and then withered. When the DNR recommenced winter projects a few years ago, we were caught without an organizational structure that would allow us to furnish help in dependable, large numbers. The DNR then felt that they didn't have a dependable partner. Thus ended an era.

Fortunately, we did have other on-stream projects in which to partner with the DNR. From July, 2000 to July, 2001, our area's Trout Stamp allotment was \$254,575. The DNR had \$33,000 in salaries to pay out of that; the rest went directly into trout habitat. Times were good. Then came the national tragedy of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent downturn in the economy. The sour economy reduced state revenue collections and the state began to back away from weekend streamside projects that produced overtime expense. For the period from July, 2003 to July, 2004 our area's trout stamp allotment is approximately \$67,000. Salaries will consume approximately half of that amount.

That's the history. Here's where we are now. The DNR will have approximately \$23,000 left to work with this year for planned projects on Gilbert Creek, the Eau Galle River and the Kinnickinnic River. If the project partners (e.g., KRLT EGRR Club and most importantly for this discussion, Trout Unlimited) don't step forward, the planned work — work that we wanted and helped plan, simply will not get done.

So, here we are in a different time and a different place with a new mission and a new priority: Fundraising. The chapter has formed a committee to work on this issue. Do what you can to help.

Pursuing the Water Wolf

By Jonathan Jacobs

Brian McKinley, a good friend of Kiap-TU-Wish and an angler of wide experience and knowledge, is our February speaker. Brian spent a great deal of time in pursuit of northern pike on a fly in recent years and has agreed to come show us what he's learned about angling for these ferocious predators. Join us at Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street in Hudson on Wednesday, February 4th at 7 PM for the meeting. Dinner will be available in our meeting room at 6 PM.

Annual business meeting set for March 3rd

By Jonathan Jacobs

In accordance with Article II, Section 1 of the Kiap-TU-Wish By-Laws as amended March 5, 2003, notice of the chapter's business meeting is hereby rendered. Members will elect two candidates to three year terms on the chapter's Board of Directors and will elect one candidate to a two year term on the board. Officers and committee chairs will submit reports on chapter activities and the membership shall conduct other such business as comes before it. The meeting will be held Wednesday, March 3 at 7 PM at Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street, Hudson, WI.

Chapter establishes fundraising committee

By Jonathan Jacobs

At its January 18, 2004 meeting, the chapter's Board of Directors voted to establish a fundraising committee. The committee will be responsible for creating sources of funding distinct from the silent auction that has been a regular part of the holiday banquet for the past several years. Board member Corey Mairs, who has considerable experience in this area, has volunteered to chair the committee. If you have listed "fundraising" as an area of special interest on the sign up sheets that are passed around at monthly meetings, expect to receive a call from Dr. Mairs. If you have not previously expressed an interest but wish to serve the committee, please contact Dr. Mairs via e-mail or telephone at the address and number listed on the last page of this publication.

Chapter continues to fund Kinnickinnic River Macroinvertebrate Diversity Study in 2004

By Jonathan Jacobs

Kiap-TU-Wish is providing \$384 in support of University of Wisconsin – River Falls biologist Clarke Garry in 2004 to help defray the cost of permanently preserving specimens and archiving data collected in the first years of the Kinnickinnic River Macroinvertebrate Diversity Study. In his proposal, Garry wrote, "This proposal is designed to promote the goal of permanent preservation of this 2001-2002 Kinnickinnic River macroinvertebrate diversity collection as a record of the invertebrate status of this coldwater resource at the beginning of the 21st century." "The physical specimen archive, along with printed and electronic records, is important because of uncertainty of impacts of uncontrolled development (predicted to occur in coming decades) on watershed diversity and its potential degradation."

Clinic date set

By Michael Alwin

The annual Kiap-TU-Wish Fly Fishing Clinic has been set for Saturday, June 5th. Held in conjunction with the River Falls Parks and Recreation Department, this clinic is a wonderful opportunity for the Chapter to introduce city residents to the beauty and wealth of the Kinnickinnic River and all it has to offer. It's also a great chance for Chapter members to share the sport, make some new friends and spread the message. More details will be released in coming issues of Rip-Rap but, if you'd like to know how you can get involved, call me at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, (651/770-5854) or talk to me at chapter meetings.

RipRap receives "matching grant" gift

By Jonathan Jacobs

The publication fund received a most welcome and much needed infusion of cash in December when one of the chapter's members donated to it stock worth \$1,960. The donor generously made the donation under the assumption that others would step forward to match this gift, thus funding RipRap for the next two years of its publication.

Donations of stock or cash are tax deductible. Stock donations may be a particularly useful tax planning tool because the full value of the stock is deductible, regardless of its purchase price. If you have questions about this or an interest in making a donation, contact chapter Treasurer Brent Sittlow.

McMahon to speak on safeguarding community character in the St. Croix Valley.

From a press release

Tuesday, February 10, 2004

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

University of Wisconsin - River Falls

North Hall Auditorium

River Falls, WI

Ed McMahon, Vice President, The Conservation Fund:

"Practical and proven lessons from across America"

Mr. McMahon will explore the economic, social, and environmental benefits of preserving community character, while addressing the role that historic preservation, urban design, landscape preservation, open space planning and other strategies can play in fostering economic vitality and protecting a community's "sense of place". Some "keys to success" include:

Recognizing that all development is not created equal

Creatively influencing the development process with strategies that are good for business and good for the environment

Supporting profitable trade areas through land use planning, historic preservation, open space conservation, and tourism

Maintaining quality of life

Why some communities succeed and others fail

Ed McMahon is co-author of *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities* and travels across the country speaking on sustainable development. Mr. McMahon is a land use planner, attorney, and Vice President of The Conservation Fund's Sustainable Programs. He is former president of Scenic America, a national non-

profit organization devoted to protecting America's scenic landscapes.

Sponsored by: University Wisconsin @ River Falls, The NPS St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, The St. Croix Scenic Coalition, NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, Watchable Wildlife, Inc., The Conservation Fund, and The UWRF- Cooperative Extension Service.

Brent Sittlow
803 Kelly Road
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Willow River monitoring station up and running again

By Jonathan Jacobs

Chuck Goossen has the Willow River monitoring station located below the Little Falls Dam in Willow River State Park recording data again. The equipment records stage and temperature data at regular intervals. Additionally, Mr. Goossen has collected pH data at the site.

This is an important ongoing project because the Willow River, a once fine and heavily utilized trout fishery, has been in steady decline for a number of years. No root cause for this decline has been scientifically established. Data collected will be of importance in determining possible corrective measures for the river.

Mr. Goossen would like to train a qualified assistant to help him with this project. If you are interested in participating in this project or would like more information about it, contact Mr. Goossen at 715-386-5137.

How to be a better Badger

By Jonathan Jacobs

By the time you read this, the Orwellian-named "Job Creation Act" put before the Wisconsin legislature this session will likely be state law. This odious piece of political offal has, in fact, precious little to do with creating jobs and will have the likely effect of transmogrifying Wisconsin from a state with an honorable and longstanding commitment to environmental quality into a Texas of the North. Texas, you may recall, is the place where industrial polluters and real estate "developers" (defined in the Jacobs lexicon of political doublespeak as "land barons") write

their own rules to "protect" (The lexicon again: "utterly ignore") the environment.

Part of the problem for those of us who reside in the far northwest portion of the state is that it's difficult to be as knowledgeable of Wisconsin state politics as we ought to be, dominated as we are by Minnesota media. Here are two good Internet URLs that will help keep you better attuned to what sort of skullduggery is afoot in Madison:

www.wisconsinrivers.org

www.wsn.org

The first site is that of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. The second belongs to the Wisconsin Stewardship Network. Both are excellent resources offering regular updates on legislative issues.

Of course, once you've become informed on the issues, you still need to act on them. See "Contacting government officials" in the December, 2003 issue of RipRap. You DO save your back issues of the newsletter, don't you?

Greater Midwest Fly Fishing Expo scheduled for April 2 – 4

By Jonathan Jacobs

According the show's organizers, "The Expo will feature non-stop casting education, fly tying, worldwide fly fishing destinations, industry vendors, the American Museum of Fly Fishing exhibit, classes for young people and environmental education." The Radisson South Hotel in Bloomington, MN will be the venue for the event.

Kiap-TU-Wish, in partnership with the Ojibseau Chapter of Trout Unlimited will have booth space at this show for the purpose of informing show attendees about the work the chapters do and about the threats facing coldwater resources in western Wisconsin. Additionally, both chapters plan to use the show as a fundraising venue. K-TU will be offering a contest winner a split cane fly rod built by local craftsman Jay Johnson. The rod will be paired with a Hardy reel. Ojibseau will furnish a lucky winner with a custom cedar strip canoe.

Trout Unlimited will need to draw volunteers from its ranks to provide personnel at the booth and to help with the show's environmental and instructional messages. More details on how you may help will be available at the February membership meeting.

Mobility, upward and otherwise

By John Koch

I opened my eyes: the roaring fire from the night before was a smoldering heap of coals. My companions, motionless heaps of twisted fabric, lay asleep nearby, huddled against the predawn cold. Quickly rising, I retrieved my fly rod from a mass of tangled tackle leaning against a tree and silently walked through the morning's darkness to the swiftly flowing river...

Our fishing trip had started the morning before: the two of us deciding to go fishing for a couple days out of our summer's vacation, picking up our mutual friend on the way to the river. During this time in my life, a camping trip with my friend out back was normally a gloriously simple affair: a light bedroll and matches were all we needed for a night's stay in the woods. But with rusty, second-hand bicycles as the only means of transportation, a camping trip to the river took on epic logistical proportions: whatever we needed in the way of supplies had to be somehow affixed to and balanced on a bicycle. A few provisions wrapped and strapped to the handlebars with baling twine, and with a fishing rod wavering out of one hand, my friend and I made our way to the third friend's house.

It was a tedious journey. The third friend's house was only a few miles away, but the gravel road that went there led us over several gigantic hills. In addition, periodically we had to stop and rearrange bedrolls that had come unwrapped. My friend's bicycle, a hodge-podge affair pieced together from the discarded scraps of elder sibling' bikes, proved to be slightly less than reliable. Every 200 yards or so, the drive chain would slip off.

After many more starts and stops than I care to remember we finally made it to the third friend's house. Turning into the yard, we discovered a new problem: the third friend's bicycle was out of commission, having been left in the driveway and backed over by a malevolent truck driving elder brother two days before. This would necessitate him sharing a ride, a "buck", as we called it then. As my bicycle had the only extended, "banana" style seat, I was the unlucky one to provide the ride. Holding on to a sleeping bag and a fishing rod, the third friend gamely held his balance as we made our wavering way over the last hill and down to the river.

Looking back, I often think that it probably would have been easier and quicker for us to simply walk to the stream.

Ditching our bikes in the bushes near the bridge, we walked downstream to the established campsite of a mu-

tual neighbor. Setting up camp in those days was simple: we dumped our bedrolls next to the fire pit, and went fishing. It was a hot mid-summer day and I recall the fishing as being poor. Frustrated by the lack of catching, my two friends started arguing. Grumbling first over a disputed fishing spot, their skirmish gradually escalated into continual bickering about each other in general, finally ending with a full blown shouting match over how to light a camp fire (first suggestion: gather firewood *before* it gets dark). Over campfire-heated pork 'n beans 'n ashes, they eventually fell into an uneasy truce, slowly falling asleep beneath the star-filled summer sky.

The next morning, I remember that I wished to be alone.

I rose and walked to the river, careful not to disturb the other two.

Hopping from rock to rock put me at a favored place above a large, deep pool. With two tongues of water breaking around a large boulder, it was the perfect place to spend the mist filled morning, to watch the sun break through the withering fog and to listen to the river's very soul crashing around me...

I watched as below me a feeding fish broke the morning stillness, its rise an interruption as the rhythms of the night were replaced by the oppressive patterns of the day. My cast rolled out to the rising trout, a graceful arch of shimmering fly line against the dark stone walls of the canyon. I watched as my fly, delivered a foot above the feeding fish, was engulfed in a tiny whirlpool as it drifted by the intended target. A moment later, a slippery brown trout was slid into my creel. Even in my youth, I was enraptured by the rhythms of the river: two more fish and I put my rod down, mesmerized by the grand spectacle of the morning sun break over the ridge top.

On my return to camp, one of my companions was busy trying to re-ignite the fire. The other was slowly untwisting himself from a filthy sleeping bag: the night before, in the dark, he had somehow bedded down next to a small depression, and had slipped down into a stinking green mud puddle in his sleep. Judging by his haystack hair and the disgusted look on his face, and with dark mutterings coming from the other side of the fire, I assumed that their argument from the previous day had not been resolved. Just as the flames of the previous night's campfire were starting to snap and pop as fresh fuel was added, so too the ill will of the day before was quickly being rekindled. I quickly pan-fried the three trout in butter, ate one, packed my small bedroll, and took my leave of the two.

I no longer remember the trip home from there, except maybe a freeing feeling of gladness to get away from the

other two. I presume that they eventually made it home: we all started the 8th grade soon after, and laugh about the trip now nearly 30 years later.

I make it back to the old campsite from time to time these days. Still used by the generations succeeding mine, the fire ring is as it was when I used it. The trees and bank have changed a bit, but the rocks where I spent that morning watching the sunrise are still there.

On my most recent return to the spot, I watch as below me a feeding fish breaks the late afternoon stillness, its rise a part of the rhythms of the day that are slowly replaced with those of the night. My cast rolls out to the rising trout, a graceful arch of shimmering fly line against the dark dripping stone of the canyon wall. To ensure a proper drift, I immediately mend a loop of line after the fly hits the water. I watch as my fly, delivered a foot above the feeding fish, is engulfed in a tiny whirlpool as it drifts by the intended target. A moment later, a slippery brown trout is slid back into the current.

Even as I grow older, I am still enraptured by the rhythms of the river: I put my rod down, mesmerized by the sound of the river's soul crashing around me...

Even as I grow older, I am still enraptured by the rhythms of the river: I put my rod down, mesmerized by the grand spectacle of listening to the very soul of the river crashing around me...

John Koch is a frequent contributor to RipRap. He lives in rural Spring Valley, WI.

CHAPTER COMMITTEES, ONGOING PROJECTS AND CONTACTS:

Kinnickinnic Monitoring: Kent Johnson, Project Leader

Willow River Monitoring: Chuck Goossen, Project Leader

Fundraising Committee: Corey Mairs, Chair.

Publications: Jonathan Jacobs, Editor.

Program Committee: Vacant

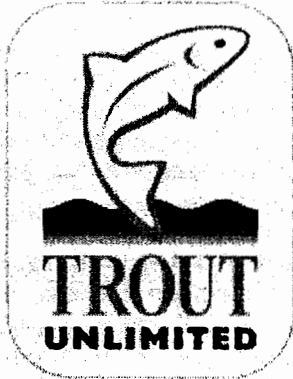
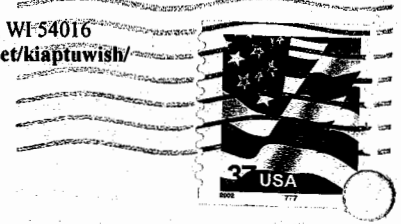
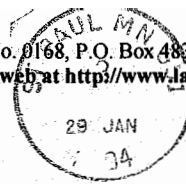
Education Committee: Michael Alwin, Chair

Habitat Committee: John Koch, Chair.

Website: Andy Lamberson, Webmaster

Dam monitoring and removal: Ted Mackmiller, Chair

Chapter membership development: Vacant



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MEETING SCHEDULE:

FEBRUARY 4: BRIAN MCKINLEY ON FLY FISHING FOR NORTHERN PIKE

MARCH 3: BUSINESS MEETING

APRIL 7: DRY FLY DICK FRANTES FLY TIERS

MAY 5: WISCONSIN DNR

DEADLINE FOR MARCH RIPRAP: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20.