

RIP RAP

Chrome Lips



Conserve. Protect. Restore.

VOLUME SEVEN issue 7 March 2014

A MOSTLY MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE KIAP-TU-WISH CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

THE DRIFT: Words from Our President.

This issue is a notice of the annual meeting and election of the board of directors. The board meets monthly. It establishes a budget each year, and oversees various operations....the big picture. Most board members also manage one or two other activities of the chapter, depending on their interests and expertise. Some chapter members who are not on the board manage activities that they are interested in. Ideally, no one takes on so much that they get burned out.

Randy Arnold, since 2008; organizes volunteer work days. Has donated fly tying benches, constructed the project sign at W, repaired DNR equipment, serves on other committees.

Hans Jung, since 2007. Chairs the long-range planning committee; vice president; has worked with school groups on Pine Creek teaching conservation.

Greg Olson, since 2013. Currently initiating a Trout in the Classroom program with a 5th grade science teacher at North Hudson elementary.

Bob Diesch, since 2009. Passionate about ground-water issues. Coordinates the June fly fishing clinic in River Falls. Member of other committees.

John Kaplan, since 2013. Leads the stream assessment and monitoring group.

Allison Jacobs, since 2012. Secretary. Organized and maintains the social media: Facebook and Twitter. Banquet hostess/ MC.

Greg Meyer, since 2010. Editor of RipRap. Created our current website. Wrote the majority of our grants in the last few years.

Tom Schnadt, since 2012. Banquet committee. Membership chairman. Frequently takes on short-term tasks as they crop up.

Gary Horvath, since 1989 except for a 4 year vacation. Maintains historical records. Tracks dam issues. Past president, Secretary for many years, currently Treasurer.

Bob Trevis, 2013. Managing the Hap Lutter Spring Appeal this year. Banquet committee.

Tom Henderson, since 2009. Currently President, you'll just have to trust me when I say that I find enough things to keep myself busy and amused. Some jobs are said to be like herding cats; this one might be more like trying to keep track of a pod of trout during a caddis hatch.

There are several people who manage crucial activities but who are not currently on the board:

Kent Johnson established our stream monitoring protocol, and establish a baseline for evaluating the effects of climate change and the operation of dams. His records for the Kinnickinnic are the longest-running in Wisconsin.

John Carlson has been organizing a group of Kiap members and potential members in the Amery area. A nearby perched culvert may be corrected with their efforts.

Margaret LeBien is organizing some women's retreats and training.

Dan Wilcox is the project coordinator for this year's habitat project on the Trimbelle. He also brings prairie restoration expertise to the chapter.

Maria Manion is becoming involved in grant writing, and will be working on the 2015 habitat project on the Kinni.

Nearly all of the above activities above has other volunteers involved. The work would not get done without them. Also, there are always new opportunities to get as involved as you wish to be.

One opportunity could be titled "Maintenance Coordinator." We'd like

to do a better job of following-up on some of our projects, such as keeping the invasives (*wild parsnip, box elders, willow brush, etc.*) in check. Employees of Fairmount Minerals have taken responsibility for a couple of stream corridors, including Pine Creek. Occasionally the DNR has done some mowing. However, no one within Kiap-TU-Wish is routinely driving this work, coordinating efforts, nor determining an appropriate budget line item. I would like to see one or two people become passionate about this aspect of our projects. A small fund was established for this purpose.

Another possibility is river clean-up. After quite a few years of massive and excellent work, Sarah Sanford is retiring from directing the Rush River Cleanup. We could use a small team to become a clean-up coordination crew. It will take a team to replace Sarah, but of course one person could put together a smaller clean-up. This has been an activity that included other groups outside of Kiap-TU-Wish. Aside from the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust's Kinni clean-up, I am not aware of any other stream being targeted. Speak up if you are interested.

Enough said. 🐟

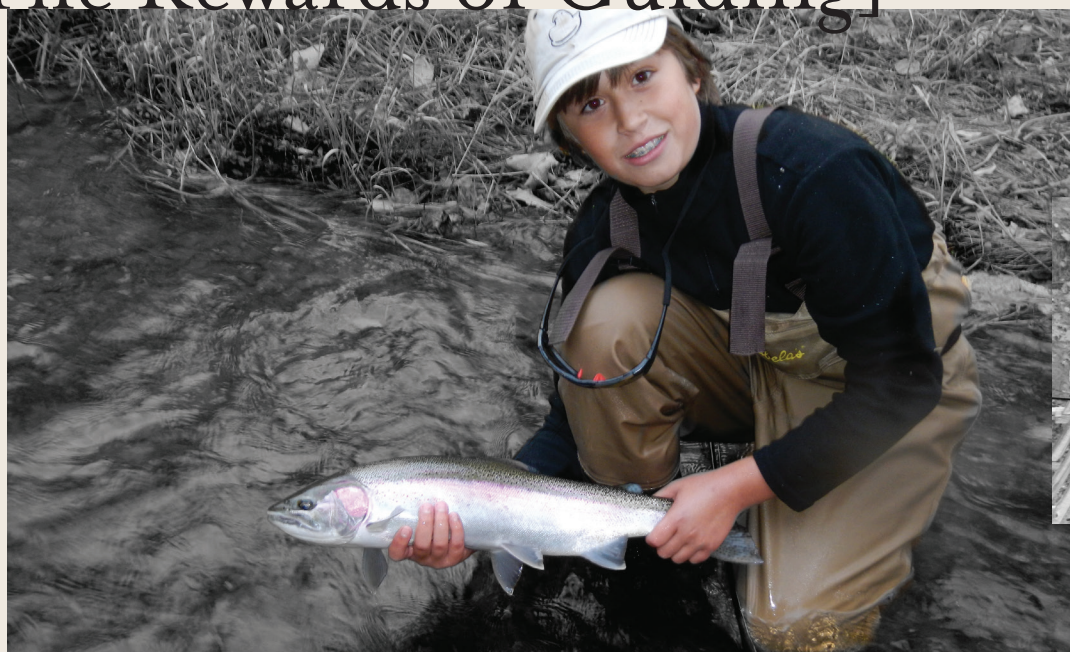
~Tom Henderson

Kiap-TU-Wish Board Members & Contact Info

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[The Rewards of Guiding]

{ WORDS: IMAGES ~Greg Olson }



[Brian and Isaac on the Brule River "Swinging Bridge"]

My best friend Mike just returned from guiding in Alaska this summer. We started fly fishing at the same time, and have added to our fishing skills and experiences together over the years, with Mike generally leading the way. As Mike tells it, guiding can be an awful grind sometimes, long hours, little time off, the pressure to get clients on fish despite their level of competence and some horrible river conditions. The hardship is off set by the joy of helping someone catch that King Salmon of a lifetime. Guiding was a dream come true for Mike. I am envious of his summer experience, but with my young family and other obligations, I couldn't and wouldn't want to have followed Mike this time; being a fly fishing guide is not in the cards for me. This past weekend, however, I began to think that maybe it is.

The first fly fishing excursion with my son Brian and his friend Isaac occurred years ago. In an effort make success almost a given, I took them to Cady Creek and had them swing partridge and orange wet flies just below the riffles. The brook trout would hook themselves, with no wading and virtually no casting involved.

Fast forward to last weekend. I was standing waist deep in the Brule watching my son and his friend, both now 14 years old, cast flies I had tied for them— a stonefly imitation named Superior X-legs, which for me has been the most effective fly for the fall run of steelhead. After coaching them over the years, they were making great casts and mends, keeping as much fly line off the water as possible,

and getting a long drag-free drift. They have come a long way, indeed. I was fishing behind them, casting to water on the far bank that they could not effectively fish, but being taller and using a 11' switch rod, I could cover. Earlier in the day, I had hooked a steelhead. Upon feeling the hook, it leapt higher than my head (granted I was waist deep in the water), and took off for the tail of the pool. Applying pressure in an attempt to keep the fish from running down the rapids resulted in another magnificent leap and the hook popping free. A collective "Whoa!" was uttered in unison, as we were all impressed, by the display of power and strength. I mentioned to them again that this was yet another example of why a steelhead fisherman, when asked if he/she has had any luck, always reports the number of fish hooked and the number landed. The hookups are few and far between and once hooked, landing the fish is a dicey proposition. Isaac was haunted by a lost steelhead last year and often spoke of that fish. Brian was anxiously awaiting his first encounter with chrome.

The end of our first day was drawing to a close and we were fishing a run I did not have much faith in, but I didn't let on, since confidence is tough enough to keep after a long day on the water. As dusk fell and I was about to announce last cast, Isaac shouted he had one. The steelhead tore across the run and jumped, crashing back into the water, before tearing off downstream. I only have one extra steelhead outfit, which Brian was using, so Isaac was using his trusty Pflueger reel. I like these simple, bombproof reels for small stream trout,

but they leave something to be desired for steelhead fishing. This reel does not have a drag, cannot be palmed, and was severely lacking in backing, which was down to a few wraps in no time. I yelled for him "get on his horse" and follow me, as we sloshed downstream. I continued to shout directions, as we stumbled along. Finally, about 600 yards from where Isaac hooked him, I was able to net the fish. We kept the beautiful silver fish in the water, until I had the camera ready and Isaac lifted it for a picture. I then showed him how to cradle the fish, head upstream in the current, until it got its strength back and we watched it zip away. It was high fives all around, as the adrenaline was still flowing. I'm not sure who was happier, probably Isaac, but I know I felt a much greater satisfaction than if I had caught it myself.

The next day dawned with bluebird skies which, coupled with the low water, did not bode well for these guys to get another shot. By the time we reached the upper end of the stretch we were fishing that day, things had been very, very slow and this final run was in full sun. You don't know unless you try, so I pointed out the small pool that I wanted

Brian to cast into. On the first cast he hooked a large steelhead (every once in a blue moon, I look like a genius on the water). He fought the fish well and I was in position to net it, when it sped away on what I figured had to be its last run, when the line went slack. We were absolutely devastated; Brian had come so close! As he reeled in, I was sick to my

RUMOURS....

"I have fished through fishless days that I remember happily without regret."

~Roderick Haig-Brown

stomach; had it been one of knots I had tied? Upon inspection of the leader, it was a clean break in the middle. The only thing I can think of was it was cut on a rock during the fish's last surge. It was hard to rally and fish the last couple of pockets well, but I explained that a steelhead can strike on any cast and one needs to keep his head in the game. We

left the river soon after, without another hookup, with me telling Brian that his day would come and Brian telling Isaac about the one that got away. We had experienced the extreme highs and lows that embody steelhead fishing.

Walking back downstream to the car, along a trail littered with yellow and orange leaves, I reflected that maybe I was a "guide" after all. I am a guide with only two "clients", although they have been long-term clients (but ones that don't tip well at all). Not guiding in an exotic location: in the northern Driftless, my backyard at home, and the Brule, my backyard at the cabin, but two locations I would not trade for any other in the world. I had passed on to my young clients my meager fly fishing skills, but more importantly, I taught them to care about the rivers and the trout that inhabit them. "Guiding" the next generation to love these precious things after I am gone.

{ ABOUT THE AUTHOR }

Greg Olson is a chapter board member and frequent contributor to RipRap. A Kiap-TU-Wish chapter member since 2008. He has worked on various projects such as Parker and Pine Creek restoration, and is currently heading up an effort for a TU "Trout in the Classroom" project at Hudson Elementary.

Phase 2 of the Upper Trimbelle River Project is Under Way

The Kiap stream restoration project for 2014 is located on the Trimbelle River immediately downstream of the 2013 project southeast of River Falls, WI, and approximately one mile north of Beldenville. The land is owned by the Wisconsin Dept of Transportation with walk-in public access for outdoor activities. The project site is 1808 feet long through this reach of the river.

While not degraded as severely by box elder infestation or beaver dams as the 2013 project area, trout habitat is limited by eroding banks, lack of pools and woody cover. Several large volume springs emerge along this part of the river that provide excellent water quality and thermal regimes for brook trout throughout the year.

A temporary access road into the site was constructed this winter and rock for the stream work is being hauled in. Work this year will include removing about 400 box elder trees, re-shaping the stream banks, enhancing five high-volume springs, adding 8 to 10 lunger structures, installing root wads, boulders, plunge pools and gravel spawning substrate. The area disturbed by construction will be seeded with native grasses and forbs.



In addition to Kiap-TU-Wish and the Wisconsin DNR, partners for this project include Fairmount Minerals and the Pierce County Land Conservation Department. The project will cost approximately \$100,000.

Volunteer help will be needed for removing box elder trees this winter, completing pre-project monitoring, planting seedling trees and wildlife shrubs in the 2013 project area this spring, and constructing lunger structures, seeding and mulching this summer. Watch for work day announcements!

~Dan Wilcox



[THE MOST CUNNING PLAN]

{ WORDS :: Andy Roth }

LONG AGO, THE BRULE RIVER STEELHEAD

masterminded the most cunning and creative plan ever contrived by a group of fish. The plan, in a nutshell, was to lure and catch anglers. Ultimately this would ensure their own survival. By understanding angler gullibility and the related lust for information regarding "catching" Brule steelhead, the fish knew that anglers would perpetuate almost any myth about this population of wild fish to keep the fishery shrouded in secrecy. They also knew that spreading contradictory information, unfounded theory and blatant lies about the Brule's beauties was not beyond any anglers conscience. These steelhead understand that anglers take great personal pride in their fishing prowess. They also know how important it is that anglers be recognized for this prowess among their peers. It was also clear that trout anglers rarely give up their secrets. This combination of calculations paid dividends for the steelhead. Today, most anglers are over thinking every aspect of the fishes movements and behavior. Anglers have no idea what to believe. Consequently, the reward for the fish is a long term commitment by a group of confused and misguided anglers that have become no threat to the population. Brilliant!

The trout realized that sacrifices needed to be made. Some of the prized fish would have to make their way into the anglers world with a hook in their mouth. The plan was to fight like barbarians in order for word to travel about the

strength and size of their spirit. At the same time the steelhead developed a complex plan of identifying individual anglers and allowing them to "catch" only when they are at or near the breaking point of angler insanity. Anglers who were not a threat to the population would be gifted a sympathy fish (usually a skipjack) from time-to-time, just so they would lie about size and tell their friends. Hell, everyone I talk to on the Brule has caught a steelhead over 30 inches, yet only one guy I know carries a tape measure. On top of that, the biologist only counted 10 of that size coming through the monitoring station.

"Anglers have continued to outsmart themselves on a regular basis by thinking they know what they're doing."

Another step to the plan was to create a grand history and tradition. Make anglers want to travel hundreds, no thousands of miles to just to walk the shore lines and cast a fly into the waters of the Brule. By luring anglers to fish the Brule, the river will become world renowned. fishermen and women will care about the wildness of the habitat and the families of fish that swim in its current. There will be calls for conservation and protection. Having the entire river run through State forest was not enough. The steelheads goal was to attract anglers who would "catch and release," and would slowly purchase more property to further protect its watershed.

As I clawed my way through the web history of the Brule there seems to be little clarity. I have seen it written, the Brule is the "River of Presidents." However, As I did my research, I have also seen it written there were 5 presidents who fished the Brule and 4 presidents and 3..... You get the picture? Even in the name bois-brule (burnt wood) french translation from the native Chippewa language, there is more than one interpretation. On one hand it is thought to be a reference to tendencies of the natives to burn the area, the other states it was an area where half breeds, outcasts from their tribes gathered.

<http://www.littleshelltribe.com/miscdocs/history/WaitingForADayThatNeverComes.shtml>

Read the third paragraph. Are you starting to see a pattern?

The greatest, and the real beauty of the Brule steelhead plan comes to the surface in the diversity of angling techniques and methods used by anglers on the Brule River. Rarely are two anglers using the same rigging. There is indicator fishing, swinging, center pinning

and float fishing. There is spinning and high sticking and bottom bouncing. The old timers refuse to give up their spawn sacks, night crawlers, hellgrammites, flatfish or fork sticks. The kitchen sink has become the rule of thumb.

Anglers are so confused for the most part they are all buying switch rods. In October of last year I saw a guy with a Tenkara rod fishing for steelhead. Good luck with that. Anyhow, you get my point.

In the end the plan developed by the most sought after fish in the region has achieved its end goal. Anglers have continued to outsmart themselves on a regular basis by thinking they know what they're doing. I have no clear answers for you. They say knowledge is power. A little is dangerous, too much is just what the steelhead want. 🐟

{ ABOUT THE AUTHOR }

Andy Roth is a fly fishing guide and a long-time Twin Cities TU and Kiap-TU-Wish supporter. He can often be seen traversing on the banks of the Brule River or guiding on his beloved Kinnickinnic River. You can contact Andy at: andy@graygoatflyfishing.com or by visiting his web site at www.graygoatflyfishing.com

RUMOURS....

"All of us search for that perfect trout (or steelhead) stream. Those who find it treasure it the rest of their lives. Those who don't keep on searching."

~"Trout Streams I've Known"
by Jimmy D. Moorr

Call for Volunteer Project Coordinator for the Red Cabin Site Project on the Kinni.

Our chapter prides itself, and justifiably so, for its stream restoration projects. During just my own seven year membership in Kiap-TU-Wish we have completed multi-year projects on Pine Creek, Parker Creek, and the Trimbelle River. These projects could not have been completed without our external partners, particularly the WI DNR, and numerous volunteers. As you can well imagine, there are many tasks that must be accomplished to successfully restore a stream. Projects must be planned, grants written to obtain funding, workdays organized, pre- and post-project monitoring conducted, bills paid, and reports written. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, these various tasks are parceled out among many individuals; however, as generally occurs when multiple people are involved, keeping track of all the pieces becomes a challenge.

In an effort to better coordinate project activities and minimize each individual volunteer's responsibilities, the Kiap board has established the position of project coordinator. The goal of this position is to serve as the focal point and point of contact for each project. The project coordinator stays abreast of project activities and status, serves as a conduit between project stakeholders to assure that any issues are resolved in a timely manner, and is aware of funding agency requirements and monitors the project to assure that those requirements are not being overlooked. The project coordinator accomplishes these tasks by interacting with other chapter volunteers individually responsible for fund raising, volunteer coordination, media communications, and finance. Now when the board or anyone else has a question concerning project status, we can turn to the project coordinator for a quick and accurate answer.

Tom Henderson served as project coordinator for the 2013 Trimbelle River project, in addition to his duties as chapter president. Chapter member Dan Wilcox has stepped forward to serve as the project coordinator for the upcoming 2014 project on the Trimbelle. Now we are soliciting a volunteer to be the project coordinator for the Red Cabin site on the Kinnickinnic River in 2015. This is an opportunity to become involved with an important chapter activity, interact with other volunteers and chapter partners, and continue our chapter's contributions to protecting and repairing our regions cold water resources. If you can spare a few hours a month for the chapter, I hope you give this request serious consideration. Contact me at 651-257-1532 or hansjung@gmail.com for more information.

– Hans Jung

FLY TYING TIPS {Words :: Images} Scott Thorpe



Tips for Tying Egg Patterns

Use very strong thread, such as Danville 210. Build yourself a tube yarn dispenser; feed it with two or three strands of fat glo-bug yarn. Use a super sharp hook such as a Gamakatsu C14S in size 6 or 8. A very sharp serrated scissors is a must.

1. Tie on a solid but small thread base at the front 1/3 point on the hook shank.
2. Lay the yarn parallel to shank, with the end of tube dispenser directly above the 1/3 point.

3. Make only two thread wraps at the 1/3 point, aligning thread in the exact same spot. Then tighten really hard, then wrap twice again in exact same spot and no more.

4. Pull yarn vertically and wrap twice tight behind the bunch, then twice in front of the bunch and whip finish tight to the bunch.

5. Pull some yarn out from the tube dispenser and snip off. Pull yarn vertically, and trim in a curved shape.

6. Remove hook from vice, and massage the yarn with fingers or a toothbrush to pull it all the way around the shank.

7. Trim to shape until it is no larger than a pea. Optional final step is to carefully flame the fly with a lighter.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have a fly tying tip, please mail the me at: kiaptuwish@hotmail.com

FLY TIER'S CORNER

BRIAN SMOLINSKI
LUND'S FLY SHOP
www.lundsflyshop.com

b smo's Superior Sparkle X-Leg



This is my variation of a Superior X-Leg Nymph, a classic great lakes steelhead nymph. I just set out to come up with a big, heavy, flashy, and indestructible black nymph.

[FLY RECIPE]

- Hook:** #8 Tiemco 2312
Head: 3/16" Copper Bead
Thread: UTC 140 Dark Brown
Weight: .025" Lead Wire
Tail: Black Marabou
Thorax: Hare's Ice Dub Blend – Bloody Black Blend
Abdomen: Veevus Iridescent Black Thread – Coated with UV Resin
Legs: Black Silicone with Red Flakes

[INSTRUCTIONS]

[1] Start by adding lead wire wraps from about halfway between the hook barb and the hook point all of the up to the bead.

[2] Cover with thread and/or glue to secure.

[3] Tie in marabou for tail approximately half of the hook shank in length. Trim.

[4] Tie in the tip of the iridescent thread from the rear wrapping forward.

[5] Twrap thread to the front of the fly, whip finish, cut thread, and cement.

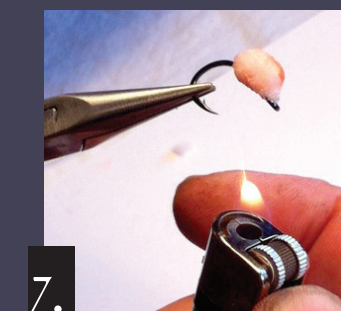
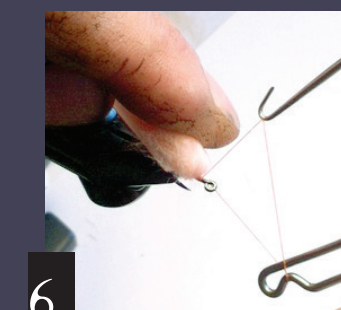
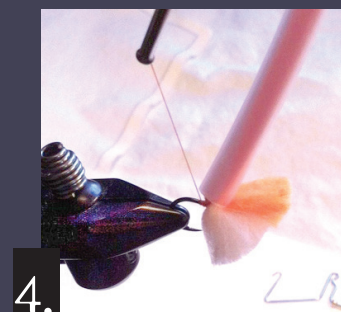
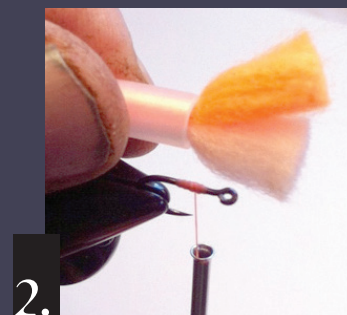
[6] With the iridescent thread in a bobbin, create a tapered body by overlapping wraps leaving a space between the abdomen and the head of the fly slightly larger than the diameter of the bead. Whip finish.

[8] Cover body of fly with UV resin and cure (epoxy also works, but takes too dang long!).

[9] Start tying thread again behind the head of the fly and tie in one silicone leg on each side in the middle of the leg and in the center of the space between the abdomen and the bead.

[10] Wrap thread behind the silicone legs and dub a few wraps behind, in the middle, and in front of the legs. Tie off, finish.

Brian Smolinski is the owner of Lund's Fly Shop in River Falls. If you have questions on this fly or materials, he can be reached by email at: lunds@sbcglobal.net.



Shifting Baselines

{ WORDS :: IMAGE } Scott Thorpe



READING THE LATEST ISSUE OF TROUT magazine, I came across an essay explaining a concept I hadn't thought much about and a term "shifting baselines." As our fisheries declined generations ago, few alive today remember how good it once was. The current level of quality (or lack thereof), has become the new normal.

the total steelhead run (Fall 2011 and Spring 2012) was 4672 fish, 33% below the average for the last ten years. Then, to compound concerns, in the fall of 2012, the Brule suffered through another poor fall run: 4594 steelhead, a rebound, but not back to the 10 year average. However, in the spring of 2013, 2177 more steelhead came up, the second largest spring run recorded.

"Because we don't recognize what we've lost, we don't fight to redeem it and often are willing to allow what seems to be some minor additional decline."

To quote Anders Halvorson, the author of the essay, "Because we don't recognize what we've lost, we don't fight to redeem it and often are willing to allow what seems to be some minor additional decline."

This got me to thinking about my fishing on the Brule last fall. I talked to many seasoned anglers and most felt it was slow season, one steelhead a day or none. Of course, grumbling from anglers is nothing new and fish don't have to bite, especially steelhead. But was there merit to the grumbling? Was the fall run low or was it perception?

There has been a lot of concern about the Brule river fishery the last few seasons, mostly stemming from the poor run of 2011-2012. That season,

The resulting Fall 2012- Spring 2013 total was 6771, an improvement from the previous year, but still below the ten year average. Good news, but does this mean all is well? Not exactly. Second best spring run on record means second best since 1987, shortly after the current became operational. It is an example of shifting baselines.

When I grew up fishing the Brule, back in the 70's, the old timers would rest on the banks and lament about the good old days. Meanwhile, we new anglers were experiencing the new normal, catching a few steelhead and we thought it was pretty good angling. Looking back, it seemed better than it is today, in spite of catch and release angling, better tackle and certainly a

more knowledgeable group of anglers roaming the river. This is not just wistful nostalgia. According to studies at the time, documented in a report co-authored by Dennis Pratt of the WI DNR "History of the Fishes of the Bois Brule River System" (1994), the harvest on the Brule of steelhead in 1978-1979 was estimated at 7000 fish. That's harvest, meaning kill. These days, that's about the total run. No question, the Brule and other streams along the south shore experienced a serious decline in the 70's and never recovered.

Thanks to good fisheries management by Mr. Pratt and his staff, the run on the Brule was stabilized and has averaged about 8,000 the past few decades. This is the new baseline. Factoring in these latest ripples, the trend is probably now downward. The poor run of 2011-2012 has the potential to negatively impact steelhead angling on the Brule over the next several years. It's too early to tell, as a lack of recruitment related to a poor run

won't show up until their progeny return as adults next spring as maiden spawners. There are many other factors including

the impact of all too frequent summer flooding and predation in Lake Superior. Let's hope for the best. As Dennis Pratt noted in his 1994 report, we need to continue the focus on riparian protection, improve in-stream habitat, continue restrictive angling regulations and continue research on factors affecting abundance. Otherwise, our baseline shifts again downward. 🐟

{ ABOUT THE AUTHOR }

Scott Thorpe is a long-time Kiap-TU-Wish member and fly fishing guide. When he's not guiding in Alaska, he can be seen guiding and fishing for steelhead on the Brule and Minnesota's North Shore. He can be reached at scott@scottthorpeflyfishing.com or visit his web site at: www.scottthorpeflyfishing.com



Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter #168
P.O. Box 483
Hudson, WI 54016

Kiap-TU-Wish Annual Chapter Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 5th, 2014
Winzer Stube Restaurant
Downtown Hudson

Dinner begins at 6pm (your dime) with
the meeting to follow at 7pm.

Check us out on the web:
www.kiaptuwish.org

Notice of Annual Chapter Meeting and Elections

The Kiap-TU-Wish annual meeting will be held as part of our March 5th chapter meeting. The business part of the meeting will be brief and will include election of board members.

Each director is elected to the board for a three year term, and may be re-elected. At the next board meeting the directors choose the officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) for one-year terms.

The board will present a slate of board candidates. Additional people can be nominated from the floor at the annual meeting.

John Sours of the WIDNR is expected to give a brief overview of current resource conditions and happenings.

ROTH
THORPE

OLSON
BRULL

GREAT LAKES
STEELHEAD

WHAT'S INSIDE?

With the steelhead opener in a few days, an issue focusing on the beast is quite in order.
Don't steelie fish you say? Maybe you should **START**.