

RIP RAP

Restoration, Improvement & Preservation through Research And Projects

Conserve. Protect. Restore.

The KIAP-TU-WISH CHAPTER's
almost monthly publication



**TROUT
UNLIMITED**

Volume 9 | Issue 7
MARCH 2016

Don't miss our March 2nd chapter meeting: Kiap's annual business meeting, board member election and comments from our WDNR trout crew leader, Nate Anderson.

Junior's Bar & Restaurant
414 South Main Street
River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-6630
<http://www.juniorsrf.com/>

Dinner starts at 6pm (your dime)
The meeting starts at 7pm.

The Drift: Words from our President.

WI TU Council Meeting, February 6: I'm a relative newcomer to attending WI TU Council meetings, but after attending several, I'm very impressed with the professionalism and positive results that Henry Koltz and his team achieve while lobbying the state legislature on behalf of TU. They've achieved positive results regarding pending legislation on ground water wells, the proposed sale of the Spring Ponds, and the recent proposed aquaculture legislation. They're currently working on understanding and addressing the latest challenge, a \$5.00 non-consumptive conservation stamp that may take the place of the \$10.00 trout stamp and the dedicated funds it generates.

WI TU Chapter Project Planning Workshop, April 2-3: Interested in learning how to plan a conservation or watershed project? Learn about the steps in planning and funding chapter projects. The workshop will be at the Living Waters Bible Camp near Westby, WI. For more details and a course outline contact Duke Welter: dwelter@tu.org.



Can you find the newly hatched trout fry?
Photo courtesy of John Mueller in Amery

Trout In the Classroom: A third TIC program started this month. Steve Schieffer's Amery High School class recently received their fry from the 7 Pines Fish Hatchery. Again, thanks to Greg Olson for his dedicated efforts in getting these programs up and running.

Winter Project Work: Randy and crew are continuing their brushing and burning work on Cady Creek. If you have not been there it is a beautiful piece of water. I joined in on Saturday, 1/30. I must

admit the best part of the day was the eclectic lunch featuring a chocolate donut, fire roasted hotdog(s), and trout pate on endive leaves (thanks Trish).

Great Waters Expo, March 18-20: There are still several spots open for staffing the Kiap booth at the Expo. Please contact me if you're interested in volunteering. E-mail: thschnad@hotmail.com or Cell: 651-245-5163.

Kudos: Thanks to Randy Arnold for studying for and passing the WI herbicide and pesticide application test. This will be very beneficial in controlling stump and root suckering from recently cut Box Elder stems. Also, Randy built a handcrafted hardwood fly tying desk that generated lots of cash at the WI Council TU Banquet.

~Tom Schnadt

The photo above, courtesy of Randy Arnold, was taken at the Red Cabin site just after the big snowfall a few weeks ago. Beautiful sunset on the Kinni.

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Upcoming Board Member Election: Wednesday, March 2nd

Kiap Board Member Candidates

Name	Term
Randy Arnold	3 year
John Carlson	1 year
Gary Horvath	3 year
John Kaplan	3 year
Greg Olson	3 year
Scott Wagner	3 year
Write in nomination(s)	

Chainsaw Safety Course

Amery Community Education is offering a Chainsaw Safety Training class on Saturday, April 2nd from 8AM to 4PM.

Kiap member John Carlson has heard great things about this course, so if you're new to chainsawing - or would like a safety refresh - this class is for you. Early registration required.

- http://www.amerysd.k12.wi.us/district/dist_commed.cfm
- Phone registration: 715-268-9771 x220

Upcoming Events

Fly Fishing Film Tour

- River Falls University
- Friday, March 11th
- Doors open at 5:00PM
- The show starts at 7:00PM
- Tickets are \$15
- Kiap-TU-Wish will have a booth in the concourse

Fly Fishing Expo

- UWRF Campus/University Center Ballroom
- Saturday, March 12th
- Hours 10:00AM to 7:00PM
- Kiap-TU-Wish will have a booth

Great Waters Expo

- Century College, White Bear Lake, MN
- March 18th-20th
- Check website for hours and programs
- www.greatwatersflyexpo.com
- Kiap-TU-Wish will have a booth

Fairmont Santrol Rush River Cleanup

- Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club
- Saturday, April 23rd
- Registration 8:00-9:00AM
- Lunch Provided

Clinic Seeks Volunteers!

K-TU is conducting a fly-fishing-for-trout clinic in River Falls on Saturday, June 4th. An all day affair, the clinic will teach casting, knots, entomology, fishing strategy and safe wading practices. The clinic will also include supper and guided fishing in the evening.

In years past this clinic attracted upward of twenty students and was a big success in the chapter's outreach. June 4th was selected this year because it's Wisconsin's free fishing day. . .and the upside of the evening sulphur emergence. Our clinic will start at 1:00PM with instruction all afternoon, a supper break at 5:00PM and guided fishing from 6:00-9:00PM.

The marketing plan has been set in motion and now we're looking for volunteers to act as guides/mentors/teachers. There are no requirements for these positions except for a desire to help folks get a good introduction to this wonderful sport, and to see the value in this very fragile resource. Of course, if you can be with us for the whole day that would be great. But we can accommodate you if you can only volunteer for part of the day, be it afternoon or evening; just let us know.

Contact **Brian Smolinski** (715-425-2415, brian@lundsflyshop.com) or **Michael Alwin** (651-739-3150, mikealwin@gmail.com).

Youth Scholarship Opportunity

Young people who enjoy the outdoors can now apply for a \$250 scholarship to attend the Wisconsin Trout Unlimited Youth Camp, July 14-17. All lodging, meals and materials are included; about the only cost to parents is transportation to and from Pine Lake Camp near Waupaca.

Campers will participate in many events and classes, with lots of time for fishing and other outdoor activities. Campers from across Wisconsin will stay in a camp building — no leaky tent roofs or soggy sleeping bags!

In addition to learning the skills necessary for trout fishing (spin-fishing and fly tackle), emphasis is also on ethics, conservation, safety and sportsmanship. There will be opportunities for lake fishing, and for one-on-one stream fishing with a TU volunteer guide.

The Chapter has set aside funds for a boy or a girl, ages 12 to 16, to attend this camp.

If you know of a potential "camper", please request an application form from Kiap-TU-Wish by sending a brief note with contact information to P.O. Box 483, Hudson, WI 54016.

The Chapter will send back an application form and suggestions for writing a brief essay as to why a youth wants to attend. Deadline for applying is April 1st; essays must be received by April 20th.

Rush River Clean-up!

Save space on your calendars for the Fairmont Santrol Rush River Cleanup on April 23 (with a backup date of April 30 in case weather doesn't cooperate). It will be headquartered at the Ellsworth Rod & Gun Club. A light breakfast and registration will start at 8AM; the clean-up will start at 9AM. Stay tuned for more details.



Lauren Evans photos

Fly Fishing Film Festival Friday March 11th

Get your tickets now for the R4F Fly Fishing Film Festival. Tickets are \$15 and available at Lund's Fly Shop or online at flyfilmtour.com. All proceeds from this event go towards the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust. Food and beverages will be available for purchase and there will be some amazing prizes in the raffles and auctions going on throughout the evening. Doors open at 5, films begin promptly at 7pm.



R4F Fly Fishing Expo Saturday March 12th

Come on out for a one-day fly fishing expo on March 12, the Saturday following the Fly Fishing Film Festival. The day will be filled with loads of fly fishing vendors of all sorts like fly shops, rod builders, fly tiers selling local patterns, artists, guide services, and conservation groups.

There will be an afternoon wine and beer tasting, seminars throughout the entire day, fly tying demonstrations, and plenty of open discussions. Bob White, Sarah Sanford, Bob Trevis, Kip Vieth, Bob Nasby, and Dave Norling Jr. are just a few of our local experts who will be presenting over the course of the day.

The expo will be held in the University Center on the UWRF campus where there will be plenty of free parking. Food and beverage will also be available for sale by Chartwells food service. Doors are open from 10am to 7pm and the cost to get in is just \$5. Also if you plan on attending the Fly Fishing Film Festival on Friday Night, there will be coupons for half off the admission price for Saturday's Event!

More information on both events can be found at: Rfflyfishingfestival.com

Fire Up Your Vises (Please). . .

Kiap-TU-Wish meetings are known for program content and camaraderie, and members who gather at the monthly meetings also look forward to the possibility of their name being drawn for a selection of trout flies. For years the main source for those flies has been generous (and a few others have also contributed) but the chapter's "inventory" is now woefully lacking in dry flies.

Typically the chapter makes fly assortments available as a bonus for Spring Appeal donations, as well as takeaways for the Martel Schoolhouse Shindig, the (resurrected) River Falls Youth Clinic, and other educational events.

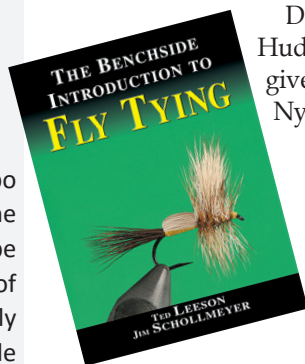
If you are a fly tier who is tying over this long winter, can you perhaps crank out a dozen or more dry flies for the chapter? Parachutes, comparaduns, thorax ties, elk-hair caddis, even Griffith's Gnats or Royal Coachman flies, would be welcome. If you don't tie, perhaps you can look in your fly box and part with some flies that work in our part of the Driftless Region?

Donated flies can be mailed to Kiap-TU-Wish at P.O. Box 483, Hudson, WI 54016, or you can bring them to a chapter meeting and give them to Bob "Fly Wrangler" Trevis or any board member. (PS: Nymph patterns are also welcome, should you have any to spare.)

~Bob Trevis



"... woefully lacking in dry flies."
A call to action!



. . . Two Fly Tying Books to Help You

1. *The Benchside Introduction to Fly Tying*: Ted Leeson and Jim Schollmeyer. This book is intended for the beginning and intermediate fly tier, which I believe, is most of us. The book is unique in its format. It is split horizontally from right to left

creating a top and bottom. The top of the book provides step-by-step instructions for 53 patterns: nymphs, wet flies, streamers, emergers, dry flies and terrestrials. The bottom of the book gives the specific procedures required to tie the pattern listed above. Both the top and bottom pages are well photographed and the instructional narrative is clear. Because of this split-page format you can move the top and bottom pages independently. This way the specific pattern, which is photographed on the top of the page, can stay stationary. You can then move the pages below from one required tying procedure to the next to complete the pattern on the top of the page.

Get this book if you want to start fly tying or you want to build upon your skills.

2. *The Fly Tier's Benchside Reference to Techniques and Dressing Styles*: Ted Leeson and Jim Schollmeyer. In 1998 the authors created, I believe, the most comprehensive and best-organized collection of fly tying techniques and methods from both the literature and current fly tying masters. I counted 436 fly tying methods in the table of content in the 14 chapters dedicated to tying methods. There are 142 methods alone in detailing how to tie fly bodies and 93 methods of how to tie wings. The photographs are clear and written instructions are concise and understandable. I will be ever so grateful to the authors for putting so much information into one easy-to-navigate source.

~Mark Peerenboom

A wee note from the editor. . . Again, another jam-packed RipRap. Thanks so much to all the contributors. There are loads of fun volunteer opportunities, upcoming events and a call to action! Thanks to TCTU member Mark Peerenboom for his timely reviews about two fly-tying books. Maybe they'll inspire you to tie a dry fly or two (dozen)? At the moment I'm reading the recently published *The History of Fly Fishing in Fifty Flies* by Ian Whitelaw. I think I'll pitch in and tie a fly that's "... origin can be pinned down to a summer's day in 1922." You guess.

~Maria Manion

TIC Trout Alert:

Eggs hatched & additional TIC program



Jeremiah Fisk photos

A basket of fry in Jeremiah Fisk's 5th grade class in Amery. Almost ready for the tank!

We are pleased to report, that for both Hudson and Amery 5th grade classes, the eggs have hatched and the fry are doing well, according to their teachers, John Mueller and Jeremiah Fisk. The classes report very low mortality rates and very hungry fry, which the kids enjoy feeding. Amery is getting ready to celebrate their next milestone, "The Release into the Tank Day," since their fry are almost big enough to leave the egg basket and head out into the great, big world of the 55 gallon tank! The Hudson's fry hatched first and are already swimming about the tank, their size up to 2 cm already. Amery has been making presentations about their trout to the whole school and plan to do more. Hudson has already chosen a release date celebration of May 24th into the Willow River at Willow River State Park, complete with a picnic and fly casting demos from chapter members.

In another exciting development for the kids, noted entomology professor, Dean Hansen, is going to bring in live examples of aquatic bugs found in our area streams, and allow the kids to have a hands-on experience with them. The kids are going to love that! Chapter members will be assisting Dean with his program.

Finally Kiap-TU-Wish has helped fund and start another TIC program this year. Steve Schieffer's Amery High School class has started and will be releasing their fish into the Willow River. Steve's class has their tank up and running and will take delivery of fry (all the eggs have hatched) this week from the 7 Pines Hatchery in Frederick. We welcome Steve's involvement, as we continue to expand our TIC programs throughout our area!

~Greg Olson

Trout Habitat 101: Factors, Prep & Partnerships

Why is trout stream habitat restoration necessary? The reason is simple. A vast majority of the 4,000 miles of trout streams throughout the Driftless area of West Central Wisconsin suffer from habitat degradation. Although many streams have good water quality, temperature, and flow for trout, most suffer from loss of suitable trout habitat through incised channels, eroding banks, and invasive terrestrial and aquatic species – to name just a few.

Factors to Consider: There are many factors to be considered before starting a habitat restoration project. The first step is selecting and planning a site. In most situations this is done two or more years before any actual field work takes place. A project location must meet certain requirements to be eligible for habitat restoration. The entire stretch of stream where the work will occur must have a public fishing access, consent from the local WDNR fishery manager, evidence of trout carry-over (year-to-year survival), and potential for improving the fishery and fish-ability of the stream. For funding consideration, the project must use current best-management practices and all activities must be projected at least a year in advance.

Preparation & Paperwork: Before project activity starts, a Chapter 30 waterway permit must be obtained. This

requires detailed plans on how the project will be constructed and timelines for completion. This is normally done in the winter months, well in advance of work that will occur during the upcoming field season. Staff also spend considerable time budgeting projects, as well as obtaining bids for materials and supplies needed for the project. Numerous meetings are held with partner groups to ensure the project is successful.

During any given year, the WDNR accomplishes 3 to 4 trout habitat projects in the Baldwin and Eau Claire Management Area which covers Pierce, St. Croix, Dunn, Pepin, Chippewa and Eau Claire counties. These habitat projects range in size from 800 lineal feet to over 3,500 lineal feet.

One example of the result habitat work can have on trout populations was seen at Gilbert Creek, west of Menomonie. The brook trout population increased from 583 total trout-per-mile in the 2003 pre-improvement survey to an average 1,338 total trout-per-mile in the post-improvement (3 year) survey. Juvenile populations increased from 330 to 606 trout per mile after habitat improvements. Adult densities increased from 253 trout per mile to a 732 adult trout per mile average. Legal trout per mile (> 8 inches) increased from 20 trout per mile to 112 trout per mile. Habitat

NOTE: We've asked our WDNR trout habitat crew leader, Nate Anderson, to give us some thoughts about stream habitat work—the process, factors, methods and value associated with Kiap's restoration effort. This month he outlines the work which happens long before a chapter brushing workday or hauling of rock.

improvement produced a slight increase in the number of quality size trout greater than ten inches, 0 to 8 per mile.

Partnerships: Since 1978 pioneers in stream restoration have been reversing the ill effects of habitat degradation utilizing Trout Stamp funding, along with many other funding partners including TU and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Wisconsin DNR's research capabilities.

In order to maintain a basic trout stream restoration program, the WDNR trout crew has become increasingly dependent on outside funding sources. Our strong partnership with Kiap-TU-Wish—your sweat equity and volunteer fundraising—has allowed this important restoration work to continue. There are many different volunteer opportunities throughout the year: in the winter removing box elders and other invasive species to make it easier for heavy equipment crews to complete their work; in the spring or summer constructing LUNKERS or Jetted covers; or during the summer months, seeding and mulching to prevent erosion.

~Nate Anderson

Rods, Hot and Otherwise

{Words} Jonathan Jacobs

The fly fishing personality's rant* against fast-action trout rods that prompted last month's discussion of fly lines here brought to my mind the book *Serious Flyfishing* by John Waite. It is one long rant from cover to cover, which, by the way, are much too far apart in this strange tome. The core of its thesis is that the fly fishing industry misuses us poor, benighted anglers in several ways, including marketing to us fast-action rods that will not work properly with the lines designated for them. The interesting thing here is that the book was published nearly twenty years ago. The rods that Mr. Waite was complaining about were likely not nearly as "fast" as the rods that triggered the rant I saw. It makes one wonder if sixty years ago or so dyed-in-the-wool bamboo rod users were complaining about how unnecessarily fast those new-fangled fiberglass rods were.

All this got me to musing on fly rods, their design and the materials used in making them. An ultra-condensed history of fly rods might go like this: They were originally made of solid woods such as greenheart. The next great leap forward in materials and manufacture came with the use of split cane (particularly Tonkin bamboo). That technology reigned for a good seventy five years or more until fiberglass became commonly available after World War II. Graphite, or carbon fiber material, came into common use in the 1970s. Boron compounds became available then, too, and there was talk at the time that boron-based technology would push graphite aside. That didn't happen and graphite remains the common commercial choice today, although some manufacturers, most notably Winston, continue to use boron and there has been something of a renaissance for fiberglass, too. Of course, split cane never went away and there are both professional rod shops and very serious hobbyists who use it yet.

Graphite materials have been in use for forty years or so, but the technology in the materials has not been static

and rod designers have been quick to take advantage of esoteric things like "higher modulus of elasticity" fabrics and "nanoparticle resins," which is why newer fly rods are at the same time both lighter and stronger than their predecessors, or, in marketing terms, "faster." Now, I am way in over my head in trying to talk in engineering terms, so now I will veer off into an area where I am more comfortable and that would be in the world of remarkably fact-free random opinions. Talking about what makes a good fly rod can produce as much contention as a discussion on presidential politics or religion, but I am wading in anyway. After all, it's the dead of winter, a traditional time for talking about angling gear rather than using it.

Do keep in mind that these are opinions and yours are as valid as mine. In fact, I'd like to hear yours. Without further ado, here we go:

I am in hearty agreement with author John Waite's opinion that a good fly rod, regardless of the material from which it's made or its advertised action, ought to feel light in the hand and should have real predictability in the way that it bends under load. We are at a point now where it's rare to find a truly awful nine-foot five-weight, the almost universal trout rod, but for far too long there were far too many on the market that felt as though they had a tip made of weeping willow,

"Talking about what makes a good fly rod can produce as much contention as a discussion on presidential politics or religion, but I am wading in anyway. After all, it's the dead of winter, a traditional time for talking about angling gear rather than using it."

a midsection of construction rebar and a butt section of wet pasta. My point is that it's important to test cast a rod to find out if its action is for you.

It seems to me that manufacturers who cater heavily to the premium rod market struggle to make the best rods in the middle and low ends of the market. I speculate that their fixed costs may be too high to effectively service the lower price point market, or it could be that their hearts just aren't in it. If you are shopping

for a down-market rod, you may want to check private label offerings from the big retailers or importers. On the other hand, a premium rod is exactly that. If you have the money, spending more of it does buy you more fly rod. The elusive quality of lightness in the hand improves, as does overall action, fit and finish and warranty.

I don't understand why anglers invest in Tenkara rods. I'll grant that their telescoping feature makes them handy to transport, but they are functionally not much different than cane poles. If you want to fish a fixed length of line, you can do it by pinching the fly line against the grip of a conventional fly rod with your finger without spending a nickel on additional tackle. And if you seek the advantages in mending and holding line off the water that a long rod provides, a switch rod will fill the bill and be more versatile than a Tenkara rod.

I also don't understand the presence of seven hundred dollar plus fiberglass rods in the market. I have a sweet little seven and a half foot five weight rod based on a J. Kennedy Fisher fiberglass blank that I enjoy fishing now and again, but the charm in paying big money for dated technology escapes me. It's a little like laying down the long green for a Gateway 2000 computer. Several manufacturers have fiberglass rods in the one to two hundred dollar range

and I suppose they're alright as far as they go. However, if you're a relatively inexperienced fly angler, I suggest you avoid them and stick to graphite. You have enough to learn and fret about without burdening yourself with attempting to decipher the idiosyncrasies of glass.

Bamboo is a world apart. The craftsmanship and attention to detail in

{continued on page 7}

KNOWING YOUR BUGS: Part VII

Crawling or Sprawling

{Words} Mike Alwin

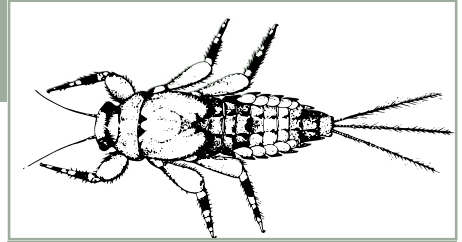
Remember that taxonomists categorize mayfly larva not only by the shape of the body, but also their preferred method of movement. The crawling mayflies look every bit like the swimming mayflies and indeed, while many of them are pretty good swimmers, they prefer to hunker down on the substrate. The families that are most frequently encountered are Ephemerellidae, Leptophlebiidae and Leptohyphidae.

Ephemerellidae might be the most popular of mayfly families. The larva range from 5-15 mm and have pointed, spine-like protuberances on their abdominal segments. Some species use their flattened, plate-like gills to help secure them to the substrate. They have a single brood and the larva grow over the winter. They are omnivorous and, depending on the species, can be found in a wide variety of habitats. They're pretty good swimmers. In the eastern species emergence occurs from April to June. The western species begin their emergence in mid-summer. Ephemerella

genera most recognizable to the angler are the Hendricksons and the eastern and western Sulphurs.

Leptophlebiidae seem to be locally important. Larva range from 4-15mm and all feature forked gills, indicative of their preferred habitats, locomotion and method of emergence. The eggs overwinter and the larva experience a growth spurt in spring. They are herbivores and their larval habitats are vegetation, debris and porous rocks. They are such poor swimmers (How bad are they?) that some species must migrate to quiet stream edges prior to emergence. When was the last time you saw a Slate Winged Mahogany Dun or a Blue Quill? Probably not for some time, right? When abundant they produce a nice emergence, but they are not a widespread mayfly.

Leptohyphidae has only one genus that is important to us, and that is Tricorythodes. These are very small, commonly 3-4mm. However, at least one species ranges up to 10mm. Tricorythodes are bivoltine and all eggs



Crawling mayfly nymph of the Hendrickson (*Ephemerella subvaria*) (illustration by Robert H. Pils from Gary Borger's book *Naturals: A Guide to Food Organisms of the Trout*)

overwinter and hatch in spring. The first emergence peaks in mid summer and the second in late summer and early fall. Larva are found in silt, detritus and vegetative habitats. They are lousy swimmers and are called tiny stout crawlers by entomologists. Emergence typically entails crawling to the end of some aquatic vegetation and letting go... the insect merely drifts to the surface. One species (*atratus*) emerges under water. Males emerge at night and females emerge in the morning. The final molt takes place within a couple of hours. The best fishing is to the spinner, known to anglers as the Tiny White winged Black.

{Recipe :: Image} Brian Smolinski

FLY TIER'S CORNER: guide's choice hare's ear jig



Fly tied by Ron Kuehn

Hook :: Daiichi 4647 Jig Nymph hook #16

Thread :: UTC 140 Denier – Burnt Orange

Bead :: 7/64" Slotted Tungsten – Black Nickel

Tail :: Hare's Mask Hair

Body :: Hare's Ear Plus Dubbing – Natural

Rib :: Gold Oval Tinsel

Thorax :: Hare's Ear Plus Dubbing – Dark Natural

Hackle :: Gray Speckled Hen Soft Hackle

Instructions

- [1] Start the thread behind the bead and tie in a piece of rib material.
- [2] Wind the thread back to just before the bend on the hook and tie in a clump of the hare's mask fibers to create a tail about the same length as the gap of the hook.
- [3] With the Hare's Ear Dubbing build a tapered body up towards the bead. Rib over the body.
- [4] Tie off the rib material and build a thorax - using the darker dubbing - with a slightly larger diameter than the body. (Make sure to leave enough gap to add the hackle collar)
- [5] Tie in a soft hackle and make the desired wraps to create a webby collar. Usually one wrap for a sparse collar and 2-3 wraps if a thicker collar is desired.
- [6] Securely tie off the hackle, trim and add a thread collar between the bead and hackle. Tie off thread and finish.

Notes: I figured why not keep the jig nymph theme going with this twist on one of my favorite patterns to fish deep holes in the Kinni. The nice thing about these tungsten jig flies is they are super heavy, but your hook point rides up, making your chances of snagging the bottom far fewer.

Questions? Stop in at Lund's Fly Shop or email Brian at brian@lundsflyshop.com

{Rods... from page 5}

some of them is simply astounding. If you can adjust to their casting rhythms they can be most pleasant to fish with, but, again, I don't believe a cane rod should be your first rod.

If you find that the latest fast action rods don't suit your casting style, you might consider shopping the used market. The Sage LL (Light Line) and SP (Smooth Performance) series rods, almost any Winston rod and earlier Scott rods all have devoted followers.

If you want to save some money and develop an understanding of fly rod making at the same time, you might consider building a rod from a blank. It's not a terribly complicated process and it may provide you with a sense of accomplishment.

To close this out, I'd like to go on a most sentimental journey and tell you about five rods that have really reached out and grabbed me over the years. The odd thing is that no two are even remotely alike, which indicates that there is no one universal perfect fly rod. Here they are in no particular order:

1. The nine-foot four-weight Sage SP that I built from a blank. It was an anniversary gift from my wife. I'm terribly attached to it for the obvious reasons, but it's also a tremendous fishing tool and my favorite trout rod.

2. The nine-foot six-weight Sage Light

Line that was among the rods that chapter member Tom Andersen loaned K-TU for use at our fishing clinics. The phrase "light-line six-weight" seems almost oxymoronic, but this was a powerful and yet smooth and delicate trout rod.

3. The very rare 3M/Scientific Anglers graphite rod that a volunteer brought to one of the clinics. It was made in the 1970s and had very unusual metal ferrules. It was a gorgeous translucent cherry red and cast just as beautifully as it looked.

4. Dr. Patrick Daly's four-weight Scott Radian. This is a thoroughly modern rod with a price tag that will make you blanch, but after casting it, I found myself checking my checkbook balance.

5. The eight-foot five-weight cane rod built for me by my friend Craig Mason. It is his iteration of a classic Dickerson 8013 rod. It's a bespoke rod, made specifically for me and given to me as a retirement gift. It failed utterly in getting me out of the workforce, but in every other way it is a splendid example of the rodmaker's art. I will admit that it took me a while to divine how it needed to be cast, but it came to life after I tried a line not commonly used with cane rods on it and it's been a joy to fish ever since.

**It's a rant when someone else does it. When I do it, it's an impassioned, but well-reasoned and perfectly logical treatise on an important topic.* 🐉

Kiap-TU-Wish

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SIMPLE NYMPH RIGS

{Diagrams: Words} Mike Alwin

Fig. 1

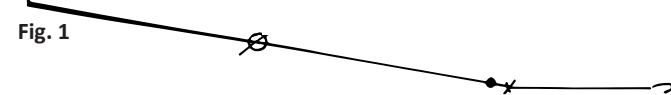


Fig. 2



It's winter, and you're standing on the bank of your favorite local trout stream watching a few trout dimple the surface. You think to yourself, "Eureka! They're taking midges!" You, being the inveterate dry fly angler, lengthen your tippet and tie on an appropriate midge imitation and after nearly an hour of oh-so-delicate casting have managed to catch.....a tiddler. Reluctantly, you decide to fish nymphs. But what do you have to do to make the switch? While there might be a hundred options, here are the two simplest. Both involve short, store-bought leaders, shot and a strike indicator. They both work.

1 The absolute simplest way to rig for nymph fishing is to start with a 7-1/2' 4X leader. Attach it to your fly line and then tie on an 18-20" length of 5X tippet. Now tie on a nymph, any nymph. Attach some shot above the tippet knot, which will prevent the shot from sliding down to the fly. Attach your strike indicator about half way up the leader. Find a run or a deeper riffle and throw this rig upstream from your position.

(Note: Bob Mitchell, one of the better anglers I've known, once said to me, "You know, it's amazing how many fish you miss when you're not using a strike indicator." Inherent in the process of nymph fishing is that you keep slack line to a minimum and strike when the indicator stops or jumps up stream.)

2 A simple variation of this nymph rig adds a little versatility to the process with only one, simple modification. Start with the same 7-1/2' 4X leader. Slide a heavily weighted nymph onto the leader, then attach 18-20" of 5X tippet and tie on another nymph, your choice. Now you're fishing two flies, and while this method won't eliminate the problems of casting two flies, it will certainly lessen them. Attach your strike indicator about half way up the leader and toss this rig upstream into a deeper riffle or run.

You can use split shot with this rig but it works better without it. Instead, rely on a very heavily weighted nymph to sink the pair. You will not catch many trout on the lead fly but you will catch a few. Finally, nymph fishing is a game in which, if you are not catching fish, you have only three options: you can change flies, or you can add or subtract weight, or you can raise or lower the strike indicator. It's been estimated that up to 90% of a trout's diet is nymphs, so if they're not eating lunch at the surface they're probably dining on the bottom.



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Comments and Insight from Nate Anderson,

head of the WDNR field crew

Nate Anderson grew up in Menomonie, attended Vermilion Community College in Ely, MN and then UW-River Falls where he graduated with a B.S. in Resource Management and a minor in Biology. In 2000 Nate started working for the WDNR doing summer fishing surveys; Nate now heads the WDNR field crew that works on our stream habitat restoration work.

Nate, who lives north of Wheeler, enjoys hunting, fishing, spending time at the family cabin, watching his son play sports and teaching him about everything he enjoys about the outdoors.

See you on March 2nd!

Next RipRap deadline: Friday, March 18
Send info to: manion.maria@gmail.com