



# RIP RAP

## October Meeting.....

**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 2

**Where:** JR Ranch, Hudson

**Dinner:** 6:30pm

**Program:** 8:00pm

"Warm, Sunny and Sandy" slide show by Brian McKinley

### President's Lines:

Just before leaving for the TU State Council meeting in Stevens Point, I received notification from Representative Harsdorf that the decision on the Mounds Dam will be postponed until later this year. Apparently, more study of the costs involved is desired before acting. This will likely extend the decision until after the November 7th election, a move that was predicted by the more jaded among us.

At the State Council meeting, Trout Specialist Larry Clagget read a list of projects that had gone unfunded this fiscal year. Due to legislative inaction on the scheduled hunting and fishing fee increases, DNR Fisheries is faced with a \$1 million +/- year shortfall. This threatens the St. Croix Hatchery and stocking quotas on our area streams including the Willow, Rush and Trimble.

On the brighter side of things, Kevin Cooley of our chapter was named State Council Dam Committee Chairman. Kevin will try to organize State Council activities and assist other chapters in their dam removal efforts. If you are interested in assisting Kevin he may be reached at 715-386-0559.

And finally, while I was in Stevens Point, volunteers from the chapter spent the day constructing lunger structures for the Willow River Race. The DNR began placement of these the week of September 9. Hope to see everyone at the October meeting.

Sincerely,  
Gary Horvath, President

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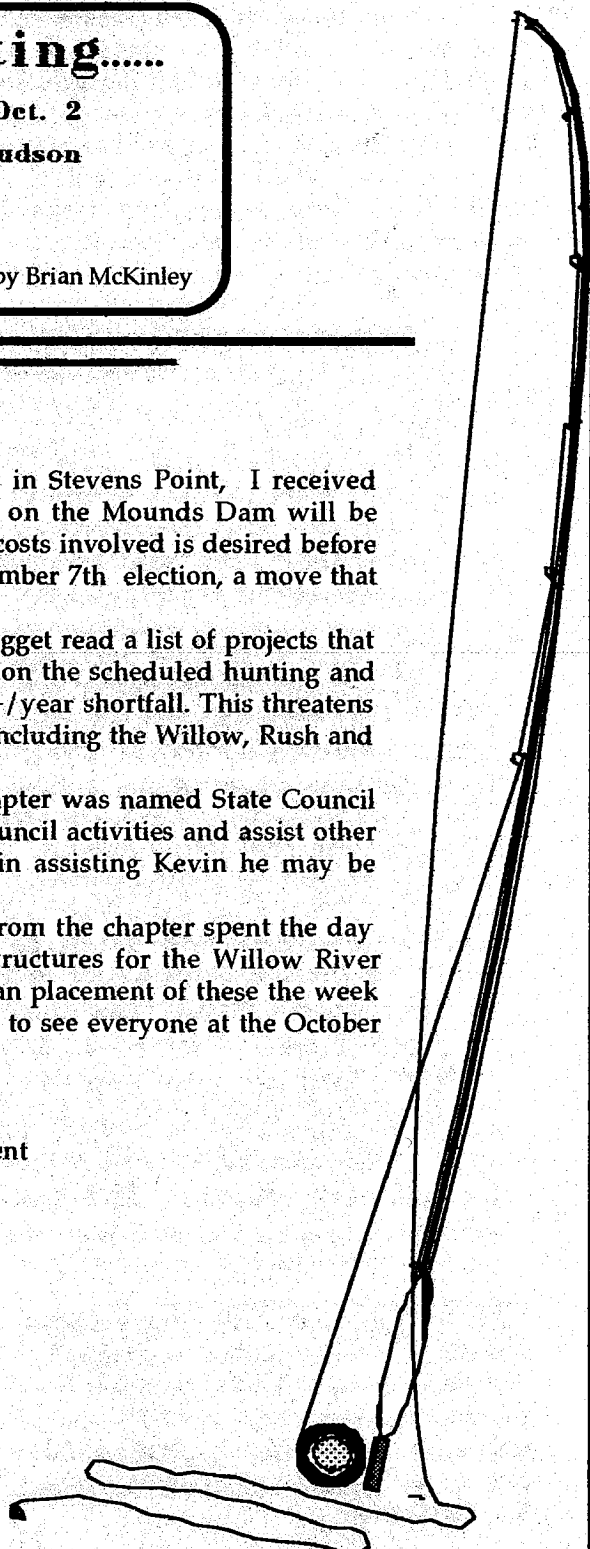
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## **Willow River History** by Skip James

Since the earliest days of our chapter, the Willow River and particularly the Race Branch have been a constant focus of attention. Protecting and enhancing this particular trout resource has involved our members in half-log projects, State Park seminars, special regulations debates, water quality concerns, questions of access to private lands, and even the purchase of Trout Brook Hatchery by one of our members, Art Kaemmer, when it was thought that commercial development of that land would adversely affect the river and its trout. There are more records in the DNR office concerning the Willow River than any other trout stream in the state. Two former Fish Managers, Bob Hunt and Bert Apelgren, have made careers studying this stream, as Marty Engel is doing now. A description of the River in 1898:

"Willow River is about 40 miles long in a direct line from source to the mouth, but about 70 miles long in the windings of the stream; Willow River Falls is about seven miles from the mouth of the river by a direct line. From the early settlement of the country until 1882 logs were driven down the river upon freshets and by the aid of dams to St. Croix Lake; after 1865 millions of feet of logs were so driven each year, but since 1882 logs had only been driven down the stream to New Richmond, 18 miles above the mouth in a direct line. In the year 1895, 5,000,000 feet had been driven down to New Richmond. Below the main falls is a succession of rocky rapids; persons had been up the river from Hudson to the falls several times in small rowboats, once in 1853 and again in 1868; in going over the rapids below the falls they used their oars as poles and pushed from the bottom; it was and always had been impossible, except in times of high water, to get up the stream as far as the falls in an ordinary rowboat, without dragging or pushing it on the bottom of the river in numerous shallow places; ... at an ordinary stage of water in the river, the narrowest place below the falls was thirty-three feet in width, the average width, according to measurements taken, was fifty feet; at a point where it was fifty feet wide, the depth was from sixteen to forty-two inches; at a point where it was 132 feet wide the depth was from four to twenty-five inches; at Kelley's Ford the river is 200 feet wide, and from eight to ten feet in depth; wagons, bateaux, canoes, and rafts had been run down the river as early as 1855 to 1892 inclusive; the state had stocked the Willow River with thousands of trout during each of the years 1885 to 1892 inclusive."<sup>1</sup>

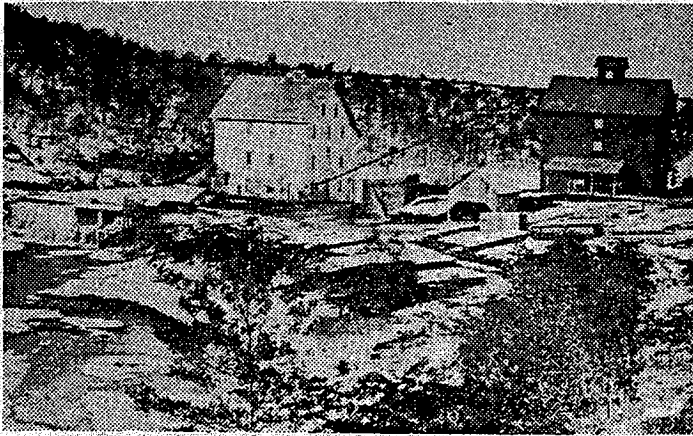
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<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Supreme Court, Proceedings, Vol. 100, p. 92f. 1898. Note: Perhaps the Court got it wrong in reporting the state stocking. According to records I've found, about 60,000 trout a year, various described as Brook Trout or Mountain Trout with occasional Rainbow Trout were stocked in the river by private citizens. There is no record of the size of the fish, but they obviously came on the railroad, and were moved to the stream in milk cans on wagons pulled by horses. Some of the stockers names still ring a bell: Phipps, Balsom, Green, Weston, Jones, Burkhardt, Harding, Retdout. In effect, they were the first TU chapter!

The Paradise Flour Mill was built by Caleb Greene and Charles Cox in 1854 on the South bank of the Willow, just downstream of the present Trout Brook Road bridge. The Paradise Flour Mill's wheel was turned by diverting part of the river into a smaller channel that we now call the Willow Race. A pile of rocks was built by Mr. Green one half mile upstream. It is now known as the 'bifurcation.' The Greene family lived there with their son, Garry. The mill was destroyed in the great flood of 1894, caused when the Burkhardt dam went out, but a few buildings and a house remained largely undamaged. The house had been built in 1857, and was the central part of the property when it was bought by Fred Nord.

Nord was a Swede who emigrated to this country at the age of 24. He married a Stillwater girl, Mary Thorene in 1899 and lived in Minnesota until 1911 when he bought the Greene's Mill property and took up farming next to the Willow River. The Nords raised eleven children and were always gracious to visiting fishermen and campers.

The Nord farm was the site of numerous summer cottages built along the river by Hudson and St.



The first Burkhardt mill and elevator was established at Burkhardt in 1868.

Paul residents. Most of these cottages were without electricity or telephone, and their water came from nearby springs. Some families lived in tent camps for the Summer. Mr. Nord welcomed these people to his property, and charged them \$10. rent for the season. The house was most recently remodeled by Nord's grandson Anton Rude and his wife Marie, and bits of 1857 newspaper were found in the walls, probably for insulation. The silo built by Fred Nord still stands on the banks of the Willow Race. He died in 1858 at the age of 93.

Christian Burkhardt (1834-1931) came to America from Germany in 1854, and

moved to Hudson in 1868. He purchased six hundred acres of land along the Willow between the present town of Burkhardt and Willow River Falls and built a grist mill there. His property is now the eastern portion of Willow River State Park. A dam (Willow Falls dam, now removed) that had been built by the Staples brothers of Stillwater to sluice logs was modified to run his mill, with the understanding that the loggers could still run lumber in the Spring.

He was very interested in electricity, and traveled back to Germany to study power generation. When he returned, he built the first electrical generator in the area with power from his dam. To add to his power grid, he later built Mounds Dam (1898), Little Falls Dam (1914), and in 1896 converted the dam creating lake Mallilieu to electrical generation. The first Burkhardt mill was destroyed by fire in 1887, but the second is still standing upstream a short distance from the foundation of the first. The Burkhardt Milling and Electric Power Company supplied electricity to Hudson beginning in 1893, and was later incorporated in 1922 as the Willow River Power Company, with Burkhardt's son in law, Alfred R. Schultz as president.

All TU members should fondly remember the name of Frank Wade, who was a logger and trout fisherman living in Hudson in the 1890's. A group of wealthy businessmen from St. Paul, led by H.T. Drake, bought two hundred acres of land on both sides of the Willow between the Little Falls and Willow Falls Dams from Burkhardt in 1895 as a private fishing club. They built fences and hired a groundskeeper with orders to keep the locals out. Frank Wade got himself arrested for trespass, and for catching fish on their property. In a long legal battle that was decided by the Supreme Court, Wade

won the right to fish and boat on 'navigable' water.

"Has the plaintiff, as riparian owner, the exclusive right to take fish from the river? The plaintiff certainly has no property in the particles of water flowing in the stream, any more than it has in the air that floats over its land. So the fish in the stream were not the property of the plaintiff and more than the birds that flew over the land. We must hold that the Willow River was a public, navigable stream, and the defendant was not guilty of trespass by going upon it, as he did, catching the fish in question."<sup>2</sup>

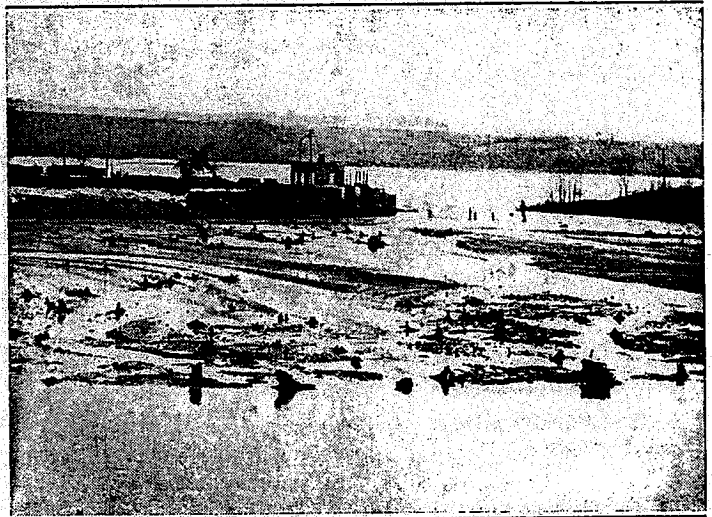
The two largest floods on the Willow were in 1894 and 1937. The first flood destroyed Green's Paradise Flour Mill, but the second took out the railroad trestle over Mallilieu, destroyed the Willow River Power company plant at the St. Croix, and witnesses say that the river was 1 mile wide in places. Strangely, it did not take out the bridge on Trout Brook Rd, but washed out the bridge between Hudson and North Hudson. There is a funny story about the Trout Brook Fish Hatchery during the flood.

Fred Nord's son Marcus got a telephone call from the hatchery during the night of April 5th, requesting his assistance because the water had gone over the top of the dam and the fish were escaping into Mallilieu. Marcus rushed over in his macintosh and boots to find that all the fish, about a million, had escaped.

They both figured they'd never get the fish back, but after the flood waters receded a little, they opened the gates and the fish swam back into the holding ponds! It seems they remembered where they were fed and didn't know how to forage in the lake. The only problem was sorting them by size. Marcus Nord estimates that almost 90% of the fish returned to the hatchery.<sup>3</sup>

Trout fishing was good on the Willow, but heavy stocking with adult fish continued to take place until 1956. From that date to the present, only fingerlings or fry have been stocked in the Willow Race.

"Game warden 'Corky Hope' last Friday supervised the planting of 1600 legal size brown trout in the Willow River just above Hudson. The fish will be ready for the hook when the trout season opens in May. Five hundred of the fish ranged in size from one to one and a half pounds, he said"<sup>4</sup>



What remained of the Willow River Power co. dam, at the mouth of the Willow, after the flood.

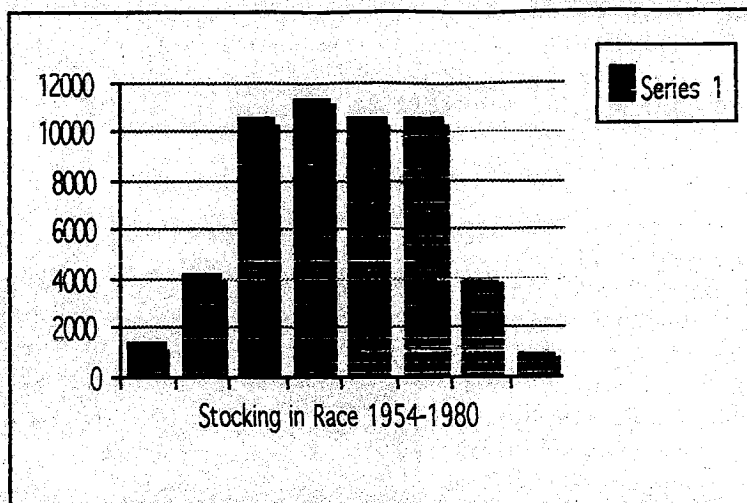
<sup>2</sup> Supreme Court, Proceedings, January, 1898

<sup>3</sup> Burkholder and Dahlby, The Willow River, Hudson Star Observer, 1976

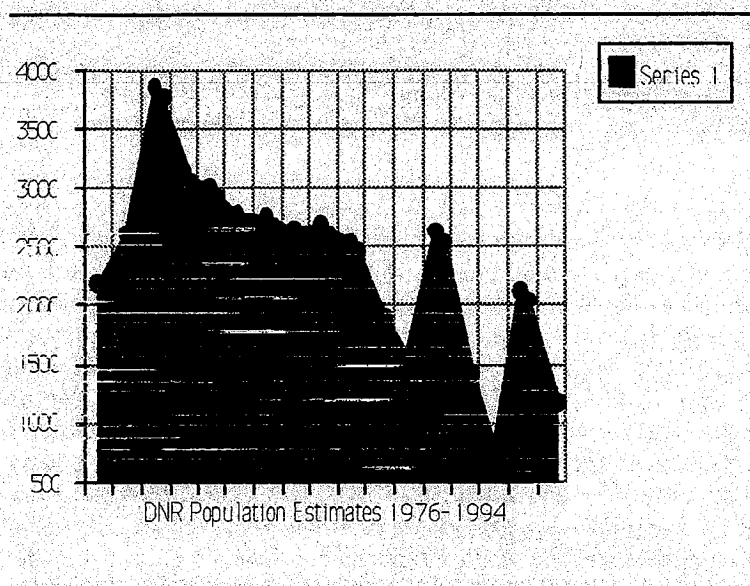
<sup>4</sup> Hudson Star Observer, March 4, 1937



The following graph shows the number of fish stocked in the Race Branch from 1954-80. Each division on the 'x' axis stands for four years. The reason for the much larger numbers of fish stocked from 1959 on was that they were fingerling browns, not catchable brook trout. Again in 1976, the number of stocked fish were reduced significantly, in order to study whether catch and release management would be effective in maintaining fish stocks. Robert Hunt's five year study of the Willow Race was state of the art at the time, and still is one of the finest population studies ever carried out in the history of fish management.



Special regulations were instituted on the Race Branch in 1977 and again modified in 1990. allowed bagging only one large trout. The results of this management technique can be seen in the next graph, which represents electroshocking surveys and estimates of population from 1976 to 1994. It's rather easy to see that the complaints of those who remember the great fishing of the seventies and eighties are borne out in the declining fish population estimates. Some of the reason for the huge loss



in 1992 may be attributed to a temperature spike caused by improper management of the Little Falls Dam. The electroshocking results seem to show the loss of an entire year class of trout.

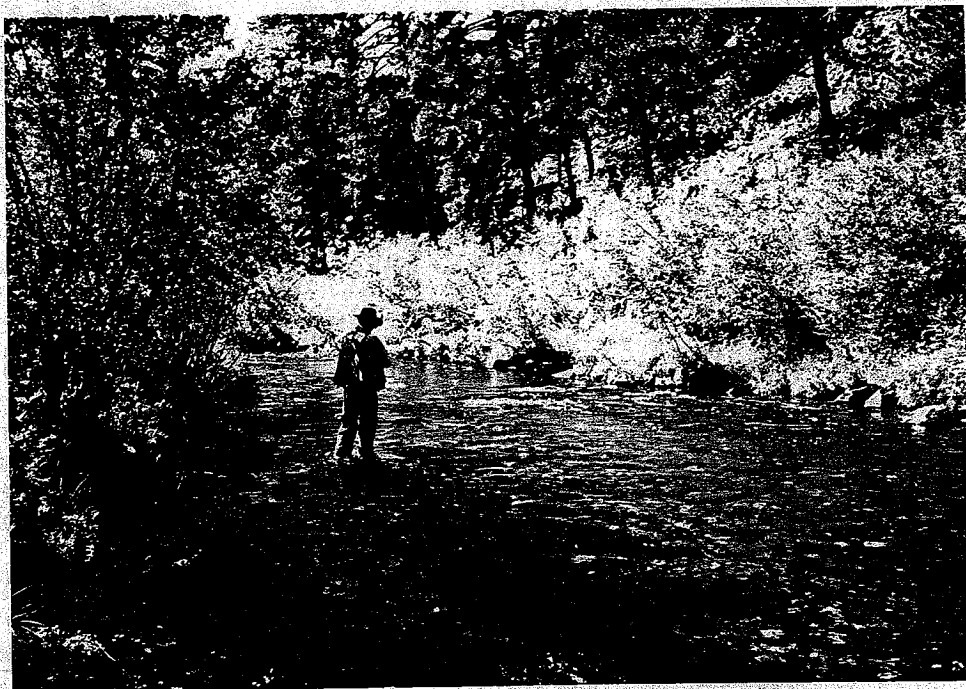
Management of the various dams on the Willow River have caused disagreements between DNR, State Park staff, TU, and townsfolk. Should the dams be removed and how would that affect the fishery, should they be bottom draw dams, what about silt buildup behind them, should the gates be repaired? All of these questions need to be answered, various agendas considered, and a master plan set forth. A study prepared by Fish Manager Marty Engel in 1994 reviews the history and potential value of the Willow River as a trout resource, but states that

"No specific plans for fish management exist today. Trout stocking has proven to be successful on the Lower Willow River (Little Falls Dam to Lake Mallalieu) and will continue at a rate of 10,500 fall fingerling brown trout per year. If public access is lost, stocking in that area would be discontinued"<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Unpublished : Willow River Feasibility Study- Fisheries Management Trout Brook Proposal WP51

## The World's Tiniest Tailwater

Most places, it's only fifteen feet wide, but Rapid Creek holds big trout. In downtown Rapid City, through which the stream runs in a greenway, a youngster hauled out a twenty four pound brown this Spring! And up below Pactola Dam, where the water runs clear and 44 degrees cold all year round, the Baetis and Midge hatches are as predictable as clockwork. South Dakota has created a catch and release area encompassing two miles of exquisite water below the afterbay, water full of Ranunculus, undercut banks, sparkling riffles, and deep pools. This is the perfect place for a lightweight rod and tiny flies, size 20 Blue Winged Olives, Griffith's Gnats and Brassies. The water is so clear that a 5x leader tippet looks like a rope,



Mike Hipps prepares to fish a run in Rapid Creek

and many holding lies need to be approached on your knees. Farther down the stream, there are access points at several bridges, although you should ask permission of the landowners to fish. In the town of Rapid City, the stream flows through a hatchery, a pond full of ducks and geese with a gazebo in its center, and later decorates a golf course, and the State fairgrounds. The biggest fish are in the lower water, where warmer temperatures stimulate hatches of larger insects and other trout food. The public golf course has a club house that serves breakfast for \$2.95. One summer day I fished a Trico hatch just off the fairway, caught two gullible rainbows, and afterwards enjoyed a fine breakfast, all before 8am. Just upstream of the Stav Kirke bridge is a pool that holds a rainbow of gargantuan proportions. I know, I watched her and her mate disappear into the green depths and materialize later in the water next to the rock on which I sat. Rapid City has lots of motels, campgrounds, and other attractions to keep a family busy, including, of course, Mt. Rushmore. It's only 10 hours away from the Twin Cities, thanks to the new 75mph speed limit on I-90. A five day non resident license costs only \$14, and a one-day permit \$6.00. The best part is that South Dakota has no closed season on trout, and since this tiniest tailwater is always clear and cold, the fishing in December is much like the fishing in August, except that there are no hoppers of course. There is other trout water in the Black Hills, including lakes, Spearfish Creek up near Lead, and numerous brook trout rivulets. When it gets too hot or cold in the upper midwest, consider a trip to the 'Miami of the North' and sample beautiful Rapid Creek, the world's tiniest tailwater.

### Skip's Loose Threads: Midge Clusters

In August, I was faced with the problem of imitating a midge hatch on the Yellowstone near Point of Rocks that both trout and whitefish were feeding on voraciously. To imitate a single insect would be impossible, but a cluster worked great. The black wing made the fly visible against the glare of the sun. The fish tended to prefer the clusters, too.

### Paul Dubas' Midge Cluster

Hook: Tiemco 100, size 18

Thread: Black 8/0

Wing: Black Polyarn, mounted in the center of the shank, held upright by hackle fibres

Hackle: Furnace, palmered from the bend to the eye in close wraps. Trim the wing to extend a bit higher than the hackle.

## Early Trout Season Controversy Divides Even TU!

"The Natural Resources Board, at their May meeting in Sturgeon Bay, approved an early trout season beginning in 1997. The early season will open March, 1, 1997 until the first Saturday in May, and will continue for three years through 1999. It would have to be approved again in 1999 to continue to 2000 and beyond. Fishing during the early season will be catch and release with artificial lures and barbless hooks. It includes all inland streams, excluding lakes, spring ponds, and Great Lake tributaries. Also excluded are three sensitive waters that were nominated for exclusion by fish managers in January 1996. The three waters are the West Branch of the White River in Waushara County, the category 5 sections of the Tomorrow River in Portage County, and the White River upstream from Pikes Bridge in Bayfield County. The rule is currently awaiting legislative review." (*Conservation Chronicle*, July 9, 1996)

Conservation groups seem to be of two minds over the early trout season. Fish managers foresee little if any adverse effect on the resource due to the early season, but traditionalists, both in the DNR and elsewhere, see no reason to change the season dates at all. Trout Unlimited Chapters in Wisconsin are split over the issue, and the rancor of the debate threatens future cooperative ventures in habitat improvement. Kiap-TU-Wish's board of directors, reflecting our membership's views, will not advocate one position over the other, in the hope that peace will return when the politicians ultimately decide the question.

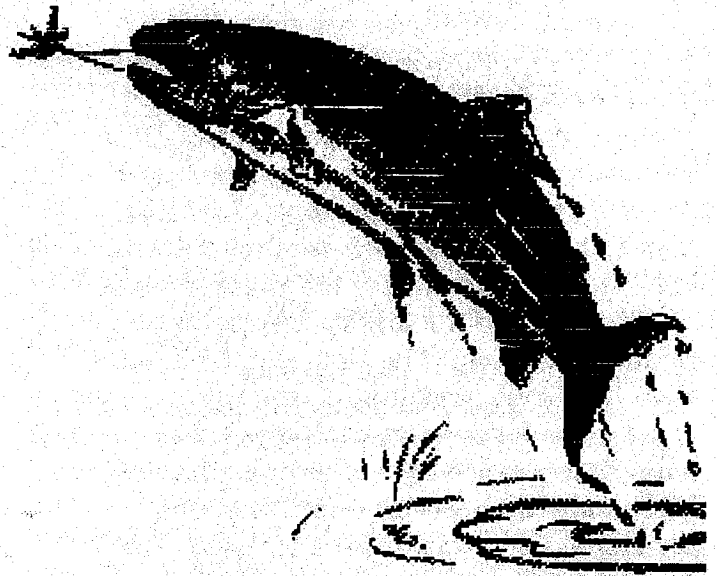
The first Saturday in May opening day has become a habitual ritual to many fisher folk. It is associated with rites of passage, with a trip to a favorite river with friends, with memories of previous opening days. It is the focus of advertising for many of the outdoor businesses in our area, and a source of income for motels, restaurants, campsites, gas stations, bait shops and tackle stores. It has been estimated that over half of all those who buy a trout stamp fish only on opening weekend, mostly for social reasons. What a drop in income for the State if these people didn't buy licenses because there were no opening day!

Other states, like Montana, South Dakota and Pennsylvania, have no trout seasons as such, but do have a system of management that restricts access or method of fishing in sensitive areas. Spawning of rainbow trout in some tributaries of the Yellowstone river is protected by closing the streams to fishing for

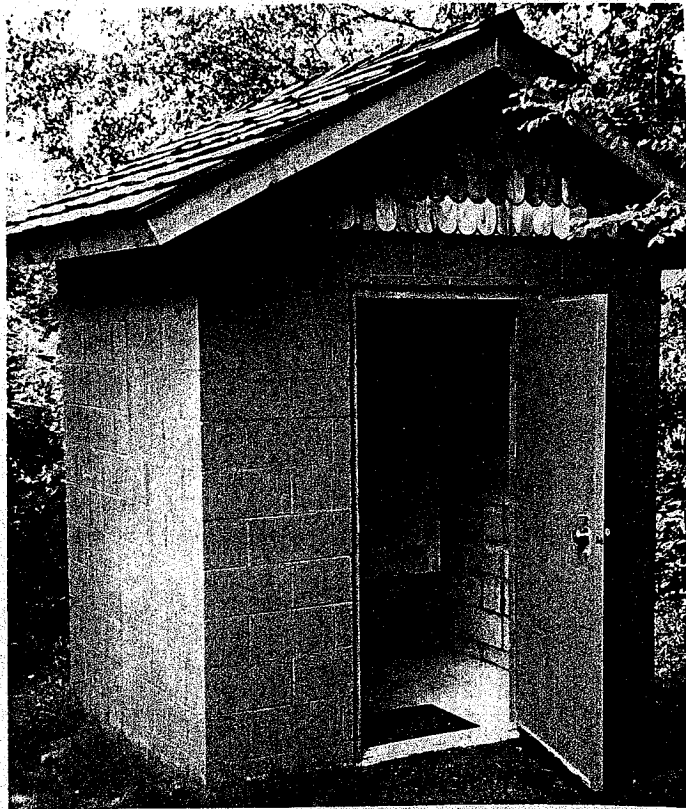
several weeks in the Spring. Pennsylvania fish managers can close a stream because of reduced flows, high water temperatures, or because of problems of flooding or anchor ice buildup. Both these states have both high quality trout streams and a formidable tourist industry related to fly fishing.

Although fishing pressure in these states tends to occur mainly in the warmer months of the year, articles in recent magazines tout the delights of Winter fishing. There are midge and Baetis hatches all year long on fertile spring creeks, and Minnesotans and Coloradans have enjoyed Winter fly fishing for trout for several years. The South Platte at Deckers is full of fly fishers on any warm (above freezing) Winter day. In Minnesota, the Whitewater River provides good sport during January thaws. There appears to be little damage done to habitat or trout in the process.

The strong sentiments both for and against an early Wisconsin season probably guarantee that the legislators will do nothing at this time. Then, hopefully, the internal quarrels will cease and Trout Unlimited can get back to the business of protecting and preserving trout habitat, and speaking out with a single voice.



## Kiap-TU-Wish Improves Willow River Trout Habitat



**New Monitoring Station built  
below Little Falls Dam**

The monitoring station is designed to gather data on temperature and oxygen content of the water in the Willow. This information will be useful in selecting the management tools most appropriate for maintaining the Willow as prime trout habitat. Once installed, the machine will be debriefed with a laptop computer at regular intervals. The data will be shared with the DNR, and might contain clues as to why the river seems to have fallen on hard times, or whether the draw from the Little Falls dam needs modification to provide cooler water downstream. This as well as the lunker structure project which took place on Sept. 7, (see Nov. issue ) were funded in part by a bequest of the late Dr. Ivan Schloff, whose love for the river and its trout knew no bounds.

Kiap-TU-Wish has spent many hours and dollars in its continuing stewardship of the Willow River Race. In the early days of the chapter, under the direction of Roger Fairbanks, Chuck Goossen and others, half logs were anchored in the bottom of the race to help stabilize bank cover. Many members helped install the half logs, under the supervision of DNR personnel, and calls for volunteers and financial support to fund this project form a large part of chapter minutes from the earliest years.

Each Fall, Chuck and a group of TU'ers stock the Willow with fingerling trout, walking down the river and scooping baby fish from the 'Fairbanks Trout Stocker', a device which looks like a stretcher with laundry baskets mounted where the blankets and patient should be. The plastic baskets are lined with hardware cloth, allowing water to pass through, and the fingerlings are loaded into the baskets from the hatchery truck. One man in front, another in the rear holding the rails, while a third person ladles the trout into likely looking holes as the procession moves downstream. After the stocking is completed, Chuck makes out a report which describes the weather conditions, the time of day, the names of the volunteers, even a map of the stocking location, and files it at DNR headquarters in Baldwin. The stocking records containing Chuck's signature go back twenty years.



**The construction crew: Bill Hinton,  
Vern Alberts, Chuck Goossen**



## End of the Season

by Bill Stieger

"Goddamn it! I forgot the knife," he said. We were all the way out to Martell.

"We don't need to eat them," I said.

"That's why we're going there, isn't it? Brookies on a stick! I've got salt in my vest and everything."

"That's you. It's not my deal. I don't care if I kill 'em." We crossed the bridge over the Rush. "Nobody's fishing Martell," I said.

"We're going to Marable Creek. We'll get a knife somewhere."

I sank down in the seat and leaned against the door. It's Sunday morning. I'm hungry, feel like a hostage. He found a Kamp King at a gas station in Spring Valley. He woke me up when he opened the car door.

"There's a thermos of coffee under your seat," he said.

"I'm too tired to drink it," I said.

I sat up when I felt the turn. The road wound around the hills. The trees in the valley had gone scarlet and gold; purple sumac lined the road. Marable Creek ran through a valley between wooded hills that reminded you more of Pennsylvania than Wisconsin. There were no cars parked along the creek. We pulled over beside a dry irrigation ditch that cut across a pasture. We didn't bother with boots; we just rigged up the rods. He had a canvas creel. I put a fly box in my shirt pocket and left my vest behind.

"You still want to eat them?" I asked.

"Jesus...what the hell do you think? I bought the knife, didn't I?"

"You're in a helluva mood," I said. "You've been in a helluva mood a couple of weeks, now."

"You're a liar," he said.

I stopped walking. "What did you say?"

"A liar...that's what *you* are." I shrugged.

"I'm a fisherman, ain't I?" He looked at me.

"I tried calling you at Meyers."

"I suppose they told..."

"Yeah, they told me." I started walking.

"C'mon," I said. He didn't move.

"A month!" he said. "A month, and you didn't tell me about it? I asked you last week how the job was going. Remember what you said?"

"What was I supposed to say?" I said. We followed the scar of the ditch across the field to the creek. Leaves were in the air, settling on the ground, sometimes swirling up in a gust. There were no bugs catching. I put on a Royal Coachman and took two trout in two casts. Both of them males in spawning color.

"This'll be quick," I said, holding the second fish. I stuck my thumb in its mouth and bent back its head, did

the same with the other one, then stuffed them into his creel. He didn't catch any in that pool. But he caught two in the riffle ahead.

I cleaned the fish while he gathered sticks. I threw the guts in the water, watching them sink onto the stream bed of sunken leaves. I saw myself in the reflection of water. "Get a job," I said to myself.

He came back with the sticks. I gathered some leaves and made a pile of them. He stacked some twigs, then lighted a match.

"I think I want that coffee now," I said.

"Too late," he said. "Get it afterward."

"Keep the fire going," I said. "It'll only take a few minutes."

"No."

"Son-of-a-bitch!" I shouted. "What're you...my mother?" I turned away and began walking back to the car. I took the thermos from under the seat and poured a cup into the cap. Looking back across the pasture I saw the light of his fire. I planned to sock him when I returned.

A Volvo drove up and stopped. Two guys in matching vests. "Any fish in that creek?" the driver asked.

"No," I said. "None, We're just catching some minnows for up north. You won't tell anyone, will..."

"Oh no. Don't worry about it," he said.

"Thanks," I said. "There's regulations, you know." He was squatting at the fire, roasting a trout on a stick.

"Get up," I said. He didn't say anything. He reached down and offered up a stick.

"They're done when the eyes pop," he said.

"Get up," I said.

"Eat first," he said, still offering the stick.

I took the stick and stuck it down his throat. I hunkered down and roasted him. When the eyes popped white I slid him off the stick, smoking. He handed me the salt shaker.

"Well?" he asked, as I chewed.

"It's...real good!" I said.

I had another; so did he. We caught two more in the pool beside the fire and roasted them too. The weather held. We fished the rest of the day, letting all of them go. We must've caught thirty apiece, all on a Royal Coachman.

Evening came early now. With the approach of dark came the serious autumn cool. Back at the car we broke down our tackle. I was cold; part of me wanted to leave. But we didn't. Something made us stay. Maybe because it was the end of the season. Maybe we felt that something should last. We made jokes regarding the quality of each other's casting. He opened the trunk and brought out a cooler, produced two bottles of Pig's Eye. We drank them.

In the distance you could hear geese.

We didn't leave until it was all the way dark...

*Mr. Stieger is a musician, writer, and fly fisher from South St. Paul*



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**DEADLINES**

NOV 10/15  
DEC 11/15  
JAN 12/15

*Now on the Internet at:*

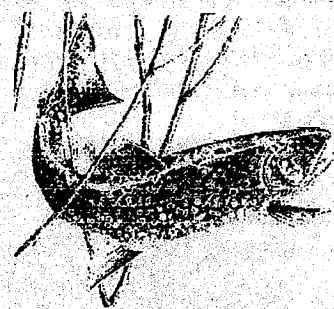
<http://www.spacestar.com/users/lambcom/kiap.html>

## **President Clinton Digs Deep To Bury Mine**

On his way to a family vacation in Jackson Hole last August 12th, President Bill Clinton gave a precious gift to fly fishers. He stopped long enough in Yellowstone Park to announce a negotiated settlement with the Canadian-owned Crown Butte Mines to halt construction of the New World Mine, in Cooke City, Mt. The site, on the head waters of the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone River near the Park's northeast entrance had been the subject of a tough environmental battle. Clinton said the U.S. government will swap over \$60 million worth of federal land in exchange for the company's claim to an estimated \$650 million in gold profits from the proposed mine.

Members of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition commented that the deal may not go through unless an acceptable land swap is found that will not simply create the same problem somewhere else. Trout Unlimited, Montana Land Reliance, The Sierra Club, and other environmental groups opposed the mine on the grounds that its planned settling ponds could pollute the nearby rivers for the foreseeable future. The Wise Use Coalition supported the mine because of the jobs it would create around Cooke City.

Crown Butte Mines, Inc. purchased rights to the property under the 1857 Mining Law, which values Federally owned land at slightly over \$2 an acre. In 1995, the Republican controlled Congress refused to overturn the ancient statute, saying that it facilitated the desirable transfer of Federal lands into private hands. A lot of the credit for the President's decision must lie with an incredible mail campaign waged by Trout Unlimited and various environmental groups, money for legal challenges supplied by The Orvis Company and others in the fly fishing trade, and the public outrage expressed to legislators and public officials over the possible degradation of Yellowstone Park.



**Yellowstone  
Ecosystem  
escapes  
threat.....**