



RIP-RAP



EDITOR: ANDY LAMBERSON

RESTORATION & PRESERVATION
THROUGH RESEARCH & PROJECTS

September 1993

◆ D.F. Flote

DUNN'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

I. B. Dunn has a place up north of his childhood home, the result of looking years for a trout stream. There couldn't be a better river keeper, really. Totally committed to building the resource through catch and release fishing of trout, his plans include burning down anything unnatural and allowing the woods to mature in the natural way, which will be mostly spruce and aspen. He keeps fish count data, weather and other history on his computer, and to walk the woods with him, you'd swear he was a native. When he got off the clock this spring, he moved a little trailer on there and invited the boys up to fish, hoping to show off the land and learn a little more about his water from the Chief and Scout. It's just as well he did, because they were about to impose themselves on him anyway, a road trip in late spring being of some necessity. They brought Drag along to set up the Rolling Ranch and cook steaks, and to catch the big fish, which of course they'd claim was a miracle of some kind.

SEPT. MEETING NOTICE

WHEN: Wed., Sept. 1
TIME: Dinner at 6:30
Meeting at 8
WHERE: Hudson House

Mike Spittler will be presenting his slides from his recent trip to New Zealand and England.

Mike has a reputation for excellent presentations and a genuine expert on the art and science of Fly Fishing. Your sure to enjoy this presentation. And who knows, maybe you have the right numbers for the Lotto and you need the information for *your* next trip!

It says something about a guy when he wants to meet at a canoe landing somewhere out on the Bois Brule River. Like, "I'm retired and don't mind waiting all morning for you guys to show up, 'long as the spot's as cool as this". They were pretty much on time, the Scout being a stickler for that, and the Brule looked great despite the rain. Dunn admitted that his piece wouldn't clear up 'til Saturday, so they settled on some of the upper Brule water for Thursday and a canoe float through the Bibon Swamp on Friday. Both Dunn and Drag had been thinking about this

float for too many years, and Scout's always up for something new, so that left the Chief outnumbered. He had some apprehensions about a five hour float through a swamp, so he would have to shine on the Brule.

He did, too, taking 50 brookies and steelhead par off the surface in a couple hours at dusk. The others covered more river, and not nearly as many fish, on that fresh June evening. Dunn was seriously looking for a Brown Drake hatch, and hiked more than anyone. The boys agreed he was in good shape and really able to enjoy his retirement. That and a bright day on the Brule will get you skunked, though, and the small fish notwithstanding, they hoped for something bigger in the swamp. Drag declined the invitation to cook at 9:30 PM, so they found a hamburger joint still willing to cook on the way back to camp, and had time to swill a couple before turning in.

They learned the secret of Dunn's energy in the morning. Scout chased Drag and the Chief out of the sack at first light with his ancient, hissing cook stove and coffee, while Dunn pupated until about 9:00 AM before emerging, with ruffled gray hackles, from his cozy shuck. He suffered the usual

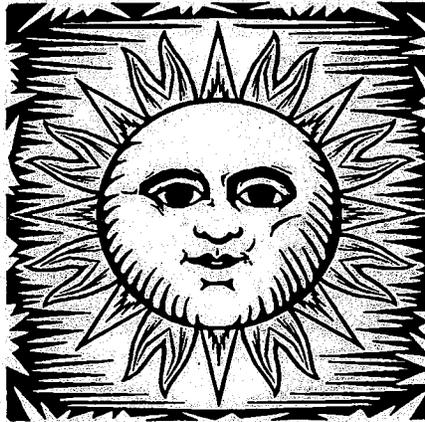
derision, but it was clear who had the right idea, and who was jealous of the Iron Blue Dunn!

It took a visit to the monument for Mr. Delta, erected by his fishing buddies (Scout was overwhelmed by that one) at Pike's Bridge on the White River, to ease Chief into the idea of a day-long float, but at Sutherland's they acquired a second canoe and set off into the swamp on the bright sunny day. This canoe casting was new to Drag, but Scout had a way of controlling the float in the current that allowed long dead drifts with a Black Leech, and before long he'd released a couple (a brace, perhaps?) of nice browns. When they caught up to the others, Dunn paddling and Chief hooked to the bottom, the stories were similar, and speculation started as to the length of this voyage.

You see, this swamp was some twenty square miles in size, got wild in a hurry, lacked any discernible landmarks, (especially those comforting green road signs by 3M), and soon every switch-back looked just like the last one. Well, Dunn had advertised it as five and a half hours, but Drag knew that the Finn and his buddy had spent two days in there more than once, so the variation was considerable. It's just that Chief likes his fishing in two hour chunks, three max, and this double shift was really pushing the envelope. Add on another whole day, and the big guy would have

expired thinking about it. Drag decided not to bring it up.

The brown water and uncertainty, however, swung the discussion in favor of paddling hard for a while, and they agreed to stop at the only campsite on the map, at what looked like half way through, as the lunch stop. An hour and a half later, Drag and the Scout couldn't take the heat any longer and stopped to take a cooling dip. That little break felt good but raised the paranoia,



so it was fortunate they found the campsite around the next bend. Fish or paddle, paddle or fish? Lunch would have been nice, except for that problem. Now they were three hours in, maybe half way, and already it's 2:00 in the afternoon.

This was not playing well with the Chief, whose favorite rod had just exploded on him when he mistakenly set up on five pounds of lumber anchored securely to the bottom. Muddy water, scarce fish, and way the hell and gone in a godam swamp? He imagined a casting platform, and a beer vendor. Scout and Dunn pleaded for

another hour of drift fishing, and Drag wasn't talking, so they set off, maybe to let the fish decide. Then Scout landed a nice one that played forever in the heavy water, and Drag got excited, started casting from the rear where he was supposed to be paddling, and of course he hooked a fifteen incher that coughed up a Hex nymph during this test period. So the slow drift went on for a while.

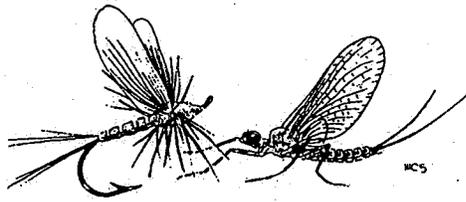
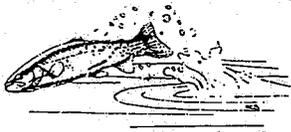
Ya' have to understand, these discussions were abbreviated and interrupted because the guys kept some space in between their boats, but when they arrived at a *second* campsite at about 4:00, it was clear some decisions would have to be made. Drag chose this time to mention the two day factor, and Chief was clearly in cardiac arrest for a minute there. Still, Dunn insisted this wasn't the *real* campsite, and it could only be an hour of hard paddling, two of drifting, *max!* That's when Chief discovered on the map that the switch-backs were twice as numerous on the bottom end, which meant the original campsite was only about a third of the way. The old river paradox; 5 miles as a crow flies, 20 miles on the water! Paddle or paddle? That dilemma was solved.

The next three and a half hours were not particularly sociable. Drag and the Scout went maybe an hour

and a half without so much as complaining about each other's paddling, while Dunn and the Chief made one furious effort to get in front and then fell back, and only the word "boondoggle" was heard across the isthmus of swamp when the river made it's turns back on itself.

It would have been an interesting canoe trip, and it might have been a good fishing trip, but both it wasn't. Even when that overhanging tree knocked the Chief back into Dunn's lap, they could hardly laugh, and the only relief was when they finally found the dock at Mason. The guys don't see fishing as physical exercise, and being that tired at the end meant something had gone wrong.

And it had. Even as the boondoggle ended, a cloud burst had dumped five inches on Dunn's section, washed out a road and raised his stream about ten feet! So much for showing off the stream. Dunn was truly despondent over this, and only Drag's "tent steaks" and potato salad were able to raise the mood a bit. As usual, a full belly and a comfortable lawn chair eased them out, and proved again what incredible optimists these fishermen are. Dunn doesn't have camp fires, so they just sat around in a circle admiring the fireflies, talking about the Hex hatch that was coming, and deciding on Beaver Lake as tomorrows destination.



They began on "Dunn Time", assembling and inflating a small flotilla of four belly boats and one Water Otter at the local 76 station. These northern Wisconsiners don't see a lot of this stuff, so the boys endured the icy sideways looks usually reserved for idiot cousins as they geared up for the next stanza of their adventure. This one was a bust, too! Beaver didn't have much cover, and under bright sun in the middle of the day, the brookies had no interest in the junk that was offered. Dunn, his #2 son and Drag had their maiden voyages on float tubes, though, and that was good for a few laughs. Scout had visions of Drag going upside down doing an impression of a tailing trout, but it didn't happen. They pretty much gave up at noon and moved over to Perch Lake Campground for lunch and to regroup. Dunn decided on a nap, Scout and #2 couldn't resist the sunnys (and even got a three pound small mouth), and Drag took Chief off to explore the resorts and the spring ponds

Chief found a descent camp run by an albino computer hacker he could relate to, but the ponds looked real sad. Second Lake (the first one, of course) had de-watered and stunk, Third (the

second one) was down to a small trickle, and One (had to be the third, right?) looked real shallow and dead. They drove around to the outlet to examine the only clear water they would see all weekend, water the Chief said looked as much like the western spring creeks as anything he'd seen in Wisconsin.

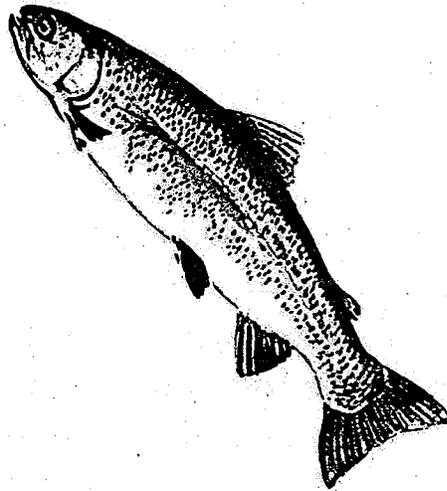
This place was the remains of an estate donated by a guy named Hixson to the state and recently acquired by the DNR. Drag says the artesian well has been running 19 years that he knows of, offering some of the finest refreshment to be had on a hot afternoon. The evidence of improvements included significant lunger structure and rip-rap along the 120 yard section fronting what was once the lodge on the rise above it. The Chief thought there was evidence of a boardwalk along the 200 yards up stream, which was now a floating bog at best. Drag had never heard of anything like that on a trout stream, so Chief got a ration of shit about his idea, but it was such an easy spot you could imagine it as girl trout camp in the long ago. Ya' know, the sports in their jackets and ties with bamboo rods and willow creels, mama lounging on a blanket spread out on the grass, stuff like that. They caught a few 8-10 inchers, about what you'd expect, and delivered this report to the others at the biker-trout bar and restaurant that served an excellent prime rib for

supper, and agreed on the spring creek for the evening fish.

Dunn was still looking for the Brown Drake hatch when they returned to the spring creek for evening fishing, and tied a #12 Elk Hair Caddis on to his 4X tippet. Ya' must understand, this water is maybe 7-8 feet wide and two feet deep max, and with five guys stomping up and down all 120 yards of it, even the skippers were having a hard time concentrating on the small dries the other fishermen were casting. Drag and the Scout had tried below the culvert under the road which looked promising, but there was so little water to cast on, they soon headed back to the other side.

So just as they came over, Chief shouts "Dunn's got a big one on!" Ya, right. Sometimes Chief's "big ones" are all of 11 inches. But still, the 9 foot 3 weight was bent over pretty good, and you always have to check these things out, so everyone crowded around 'ole Dunn. Now, here's a guy so polite and unassuming, so reticent and naive, so pleasant and uncomplicated, they all assumed he needed a lot of advice! "Pull 'em out of the weeds" they yelled, and "Don't let 'em into that snag!" So now the big boy, up to 18 inches by now, starts upstream, and Dunn is walking him like he's on a leash. This of course drives the Chief crazy, so he added a couple inches. "Got to be 20, Dunn! Is that your biggest trout, Dunn?" Just what he needed, right?

Now quiet, respectful Dunn is obliged to explain the size of his tippet and condition of his knot to these clowns! Whoa, now the fish takes a big dive for the rip-rap, and starts a steady pull down stream. Drag figured he's gone for sure, and felt safe in adding four inches. "Gotta be 24, Dunn, don't let 'em run down on ya!" Not a jump, and a strange light color, so Chief added "A 24 inch Rainbow, Dunn."



Well, after running 30 yards up, he's back down that and another 50, when Scout hands #2 the net, telling him to cut the fish off before he gets to the big culvert. But the kid's no fool, and wants no part in losing his dad's fish. He backs off up the creek, hoping these jokers don't kill the poor thing. That was about all Scout could think of, besides deliberately breaking the damn net, to get out of helping, and possibly losing Dunn's fish. But the net cost \$50 bucks so he couldn't do it, and he got in to turn the fish.

So now Dunn's got his rod doubled over, unwilling to put on any more pressure, Scout's waving the net and snags the line,

lucks out and gets free when the fish runs up, and Chief is shouting encouragement to everyone. This goes on for a while, until Scout finally dares to slide the net under and they pull the big brown out. Drag jumps in to measure him at exactly 20 inches, and Dunn is heard to mutter "Damn, if I'd broke 'em off he'd still be 24!"

During the 20 minute battle the sun had gone, and Chief's photo flash was blinding everyone. Dunn was trying to get the fish back to the water, but Chief wanted a group shot with some spectacular background. Dunn nixed that and jumped back in, but succumbed to just one more picture before releasing a very tired fish. And all the hearts stopped a moment as the big guy first rolled down, but then righted himself and turned up in a little hole right in front of this crazy mob. Stayed right there, too, for at least an hour before they finally could bring themselves to leave. What a great testament to a strong fish and a quiet man; truly a perfect end to 'Dunn's Excellent Adventure'.



JOIN TROUT UNLIMITED AND HELP PROTECT THE RESOURCE

Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

Chapter #0168



The Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited was founded in 1972 for the purpose of protecting, improving and restoring the trout habitat in western Wisconsin. We derive our name from the local rivers of particular concern to us: the Kinnickinnic, Apple, Willow and Rush. Over the years we have worked closely with private citizens, local governments and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on various projects such as storm water monitoring and management, bank stabilization, stream bank debrushing, fish population surveys, placement of in-stream habitat structures, fishing clinics and fish stocking. Conservation minded persons can find rewarding work within our chapter ranging from preparing mailings to streamside projects.

There are also pleasant social experiences with Kiap-TU-Wish also. We hold regular meetings from September through May on the first Wednesday of the month. Meetings are held at the *Hudson House* located off the south access road (exit #2), on I-94 in Hudson, Wisconsin. Meetings begin at 8pm with dinner starting at 6:30 (reservations are not needed). Our meetings feature presentations on angling, flytying, stream ecology and water quality and well as the latest issues that are affecting our local, regional and national resources. Of course there are the usual fishing stories and tall tales and we would be very interested in hearing yours at the next meeting! Please join us!

Membership includes a subscription of the national magazine *Trout* and the state council newspaper *Wisconsin Trout*, both published quarterly. The chapter also produces a newsletter, *Rip-Rap* published monthly, September through May.

YES! Please begin my one-year membership to the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited #0168

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Mail to:
Trout Unlimited
Membership Services
800 Follin Lane Southeast
Suite 250
Vienna, VA 22180-4959

Regular Membership

Family Membership

Payment Enclosed*

Please Bill Me

Mastercard # _____ Exp. Date _____

Visa # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____



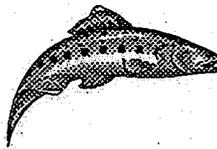
◆ Notes from the President:

As you may of noticed below in our meeting schedule, we still have a number of open dates for presentations at our meetings. If you took one of those great fishing vacations or have a topic that you think would interest the chapter please let me know. If we don't get some volunteers I'm going to dig out my old presentations on Alaska and the Big Horn and I'm not sure you want that!

And if your feeling creative, write an article for the Rip-Rap. I need any article more than a column long in an IBM compatible format so that I can convert it into Word for Windows. Sorry but I just don't have the time to re-type long articles.

I hope to see you at our first meeting on Sept.1. Please come for dinner so we can keep the management at the Best Western happy!!

Andy Lamberson



Kiap-TU-Wish

President: Andy Lamberson (715)386-7568 Vice President: Gary Horvath (715)425-8489

Secretary: Don Ausemus (612)636-0625 Treasurer: Tom Battey (612)456-0889

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jon Jacobs (715)386-7822

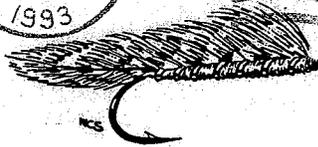
Kent Johnson (715)386-5299

Gary Horvath (715)425-8489

Craig Mason (715)425-2282

Mike Alwin (612)439-8159

Skip James (612)436-1565



Kiap-TU-Wish

1993 Meetings

Sept. 1: Mike Spittler's: New Zealand

Oct. 6: Member's Slide Show

Nov. 2:

Dec. 7: Christmas banquet

1994 Meetings

Jan. 5:

Feb. 2:

March 2: Business Meeting

April 6: Fly Tiers

May 4: Marty Engel Wisc. DNR

Dinner at 6:30 Meeting at 8:00

All meetings are at the Hudson House.

The Rip-Rap is printed on paper which contains 50% recycled content of which 10% is post-consumer.

**KIAP-TU-WISH
TROUT UNLIMITED
P.O. BOX 483
HUDSON, WI 54016**