



# Rip Rap

## September Meeting.....

When: Wednesday, Sept. 4  
Where: JR Ranch, Hudson  
Dinner: 6:30pm  
Program: 8:00pm

### President's Lines:

It's hard to believe but summer is almost gone and that means that RIP-RAP is back. You will notice that Ken Hanson, longtime RIP-RAP Editor, has turned the reins over to the very capable Skip James. Editing RIP-RAP is one of the most demanding jobs in the chapter and Ken Hanson more than met the challenge. Many thanks Ken!

It was a busy Summer for the chapter. Installation of the water quality monitoring station on the Lower Willow River moved forward. Thanks to the herculean efforts of Chuck Goossen, Vern Alberts, Twin Cities Chapter member Bill Hinton and others, we met the July permit deadline for installation. The Mounds Dam removal effort has been a roller coaster ride for those members intimately involved. I want to thank all members who took the time to write and attend the July 30th meeting in Hudson. The issue will go before the State Building Commission in September for a decision on the dam's fate. (see story, pg. 2 )

Based on information from the chapter, FERC may be ordering the City of River Falls Municipal Utility to upgrade their facility to comply with their permit in regard to maintaining flows on the lower Kinnickinnic River. Kent Johnson and a small band of volunteers sighted two more temperature monitors; one each on the Rocky Branch and South Fork of the Kinni. Members assisted the DNR in the installation of monitoring equipment as part of the Priority Watershed project on the Kinni.

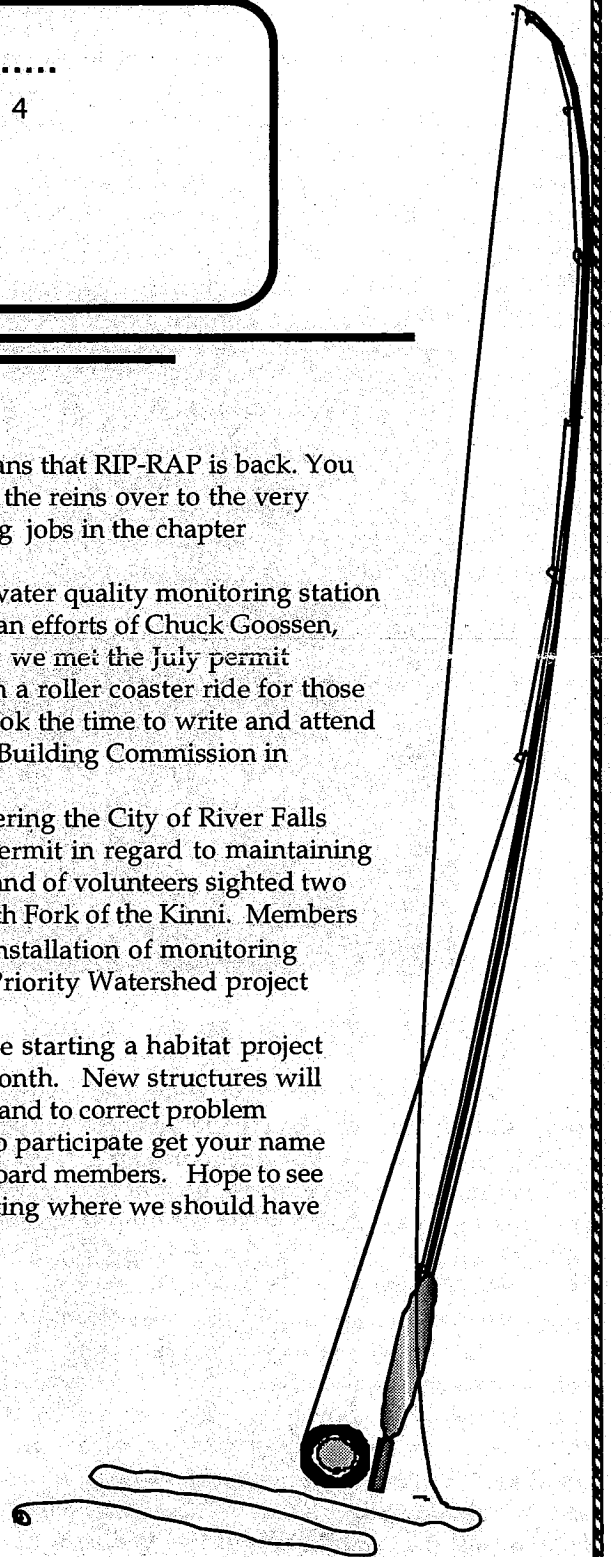
Finally, we will be starting a habitat project on the Willow Race this month. New structures will be placed to provide cover and to correct problem areas. If you would like to participate get your name and number to one of the Board members. Hope to see you at the September meeting where we should have more details.

Gary Horvath

President  
Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

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## Debate Over the Fate of **Mounds Dam**

The mood was tense as people gathered at the St. Croix County Government Center on the evening of July 30 for a hearing before a committee of the State Building Commission. The agenda: to gather public opinion as to whether to remove or repair the Mounds Dam in Willow River State Park. This second meeting (the first was at Willow River State Park in April), was to quell the outcry of those who felt that the public notice of the first meeting had been suspiciously hasty and insufficient. Charges of "secret negotiations" and "TU, DNR collusion" were heard. Extra chairs were brought to hold the overflow crowd, and yet there were many standing at the back of the room and out in the hall.

The meeting was called to order by the chairperson of the Administrative Affairs Subcommittee of the State of Wisconsin Building Commission, Senator Carol Buettner. With the help of an aide from the Governor's office, she distributed slips of paper to all those in attendance, collecting the names, addresses and positions of those who were there, and identifying those who wished to testify. Representative Sheila Harsdorf was in attendance, as well as a member of Senator Alice Clauseng's staff. Ron Raymond, of the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors, and James Johnson, candidate for the Democratic nomination for state representative were also present. Many members of Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter showed up to voice their support for removal of the dam.



TU officers confer at hearing: Goosen, Horvath, Johnson, Stifter

The DNR's proposal was outlined by John Hagman. He described the procedure necessary to shore up the dam's foundation and then explained why his agency had opted for removal after feasibility studies had indicated a much larger cost than previously projected. In essence, removing the dam would restore over two miles of stream bed flowing through a rocky gorge, with at least one cataract. The river would return to being a cold water fishery. The fast moving water would scour silt from the stream bed, improve water quality through increased aeration, lower the ambient temperature, eliminate the eutrophic effects of a shallow pond, and give the state park a new scenic focus. The DNR estimates that the cost of removal would be considerably less than repair, a one-time expense that would eliminate future maintenance and inevitable removal at some point in the future.

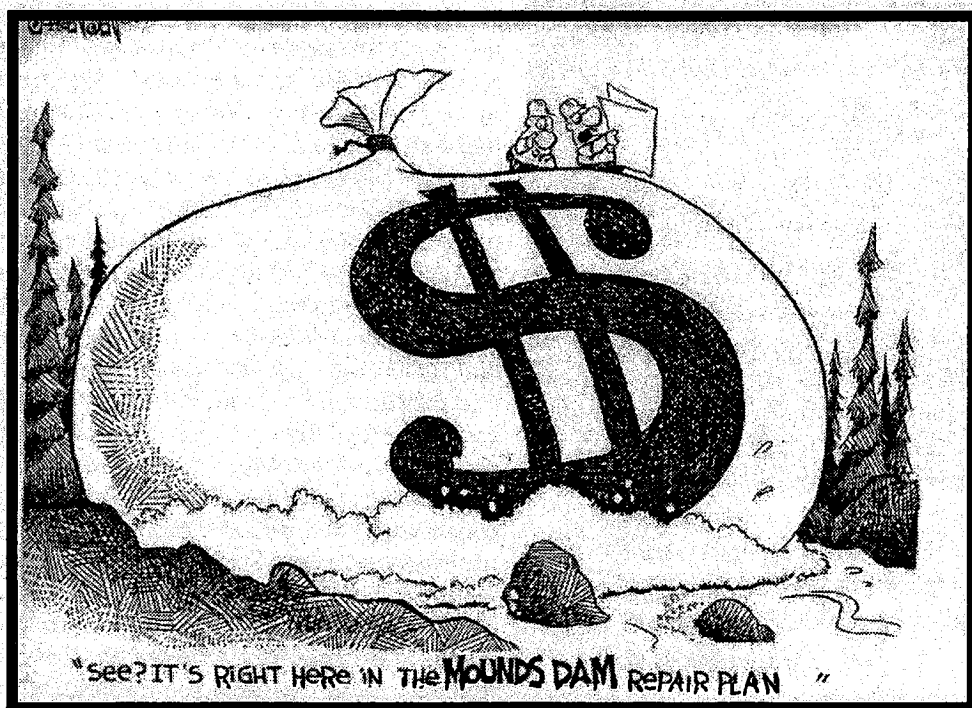
Some local residents spoke fervently of many pleasant experiences around the present impoundment, family fishing, swimming, hiking, and pleaded with the commission to repair the dam. One elderly man, with tears in his eyes, described the Spring crappie run, the lanterns hanging in the evening from the Rattle Bridge, the shouts of children. A woman told of taking her children swimming near the dam, watching eagles overhead. She thinks of the pond as a "blessing" in her quest to provide wholesome activities for her family. Rev. Arne Waznik, in a wheelchair and Wisconsin Badger's cap, testified that the lake was one of only a few fishing places in the county accessible to bank fishing, and that he had taught two generations of his family to 'bobber fish' there. Another woman spoke of family picnics in the quiet beauty of the glen below the dam, "one of the most beautiful wild places on earth!" she said.

Those against dam removal also questioned the DNR's representatives about where they expected all the collected silt to go. Down to Little Falls Lake? Into the St. Croix? Were the cost estimates firm? "No, they're not," explained Hagman. They expressed doubt that the warm water smallmouth bass fishery upstream of the flowage would suddenly become a trout fishery when the dam was removed. They pointed with dismay to the "swamp" created when the Willow Falls dam was removed two years ago.

Proponents of the DNR's position, including representatives of Trout Unlimited, the Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League, Wisconsin Rivers, and Eau Galle Rush River Sportsman's Club reiterated the benefits of returning the Willow River to its natural bed: cleaner, colder water, a restored trout fishery, natural beauty, and, of course, lower cost. The President of the Eau Galle Rush River Club, Arby Linder, spoke with dark humor about the futile attempts of the Army Corps of Engineers to tame the Eau Galle with a dam, the cost overruns, the floods, and the terrible fishing that resulted. He also spoke of the many hidden costs of maintaining dams, and the rush of corporate America to divest themselves of those costs by "giving" the dams and surrounding land to counties, with recent examples in Pierce County. Kent Johnson spoke authoritatively about water quality, Gary Horvath summed up TU's position, and Roger Fairbanks, the founder of Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter, lent his support for dam removal. Tony Stifter, Andy Lamberson, and others spoke of the need for fiscal responsibility in the light of recent budget cuts at the DNR, and urged the commission to opt for a one time expense, rather than accepting the burden of future maintenance on a structure that is basically unsound, and will have to be destroyed in thirty years.

The speakers were equally divided on the issue. Of the people present, about two thirds were for removal, and one third against. One man submitted a petition with over fifty signatures he had collected in favor of repairing the dam. TU members were well represented among the crowd, and John Jacobs pointedly asked the chairperson what weight would be given to the sentiment expressed at the previous hearing, which was strongly in favor of removal. Senator Buettner assured everyone that all relevant opinion would be considered in the commission's ultimate decision, and thanked the assemblage for their courtesy and neighborliness. She said that they had been prepared for a "hornet's nest" of controversy, and there were a few mutterings in the crowd about 'elitist fly fishermen', but she was pleasantly surprised by the civility of the discussion.

Of course, when the Burkhardt family decided to dam the Willow River in the 1920's, there was no public hearing. No residents had the chance to argue that the dam would destroy their brook trout fishery, or flood a beautiful wild gorge, or inhibit their ability to raft logs down to the St. Croix. There was no Department of Natural Resources plan for land use, no State Park, no process for deciding what was in the public's best interest. Thank goodness times have changed. Local residents, St. Croix County, and Trout Unlimited will await the decision to be made far away in Madison, but they should feel secure in the knowledge that their voices have been heard.





## Mitchells Visit Flyshop

The 13th of July was a lucky day for those who showed up at the flyshop on Saturday morning. Retired owners Bob and Jean Mitchell were in town to attend the wedding of their granddaughter Marin, and couldn't resist a visit with old friends. Mike Alwin and staff provided a cake inscribed "Welcome, Bob and Jean," and the shop was crowded with those who had heard through the grapevine that the Mitchells would be there. Bob eyed the merchandise in the shop, with its date control price tags, and the inventory keeping cash register, and asked "But where's the cigar box?" Jean didn't find any chenille to wind onto cards, but was kept busy exchanging news and renewing acquaintances. Both appeared to be hale and hearty, and would welcome visitors at their new home in Belgrade, Montana. Bob might even share some of his new fishing haunts. Their address is: 101 10th St., Belgrade, MT 59714, and the phone number is (406) 388-4936



Bob and Jean Mitchell  
Charter Members of  
Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter  
Trout Unlimited

## Floods Damage Montana Spring Creeks

By George Anderson

Due to a quick and voluminous snow melt, the Yellowstone River has invaded two of the most prized and frequently fished spring creeks in Montana's Paradise Valley, O'Hair's and DePuy's. Before the white man came, the springs which nourish the Yellowstone ran directly into the river, creating short wetland areas much favored by waterfowl. Ranchers built dikes between the springs and the river, diverting the waterflows from the springs to new beds, roughly parallel to the river, but separated from it by as much as half a mile. These newly created 'spring creeks' were used for irrigation, drinking water, and other household uses before finally entering the main river. Of course, the spring ecosystem plants and animals quickly filled the expanded volume of water with weed beds, insect life and crustaceans, and the trout from the river migrated to the newly created rich environment and grew fat and sassy.

The damaged creek, including Armstrong's (between the Yellowstone and the upper bridge on the O'Hair property), O'Hair's (the section between the big spring and the diversion ditch) and DePuy's (from the diversion ditch to the Yellowstone) for some years has been managed as a catch and release trout fishery. Rod fees are \$50.00/day. Many anglers from our chapter have enjoyed the fabulous fishing for large, wild trout, who feed on tiny insects and who have Ph.D's in discovering feathery fakes. Excellent hatches and a year round season have made this water justly famous. Bob Auger is the river keeper at DePuy's, and Agnes and Allyn O'Hair employ him on a part time basis as a consultant.

This June, the flooding Yellowstone rose over the earthen dikes that constrained the spring creek, formed a new channel where the spring creek had been, and washed the trout, the insects and the weeds into the main river, ruining any chance for fishing either property this Summer or Fall. The two families realize that they should work together to rebuild stronger, concrete diversion dikes to separate the spring water from the main river once again, as well as the instream structures and habitat improvements that provided ideal conditions for trout growth. As the rod fee income from the creek has (ironically speaking) dried up, they have had to seek other sources of funding for the reclamation project. The Nature Conservancy has become involved in the planning and execution of the new dikes, with Auger as the onsite coordinator of the effort. Bob indicated to George Anderson, owner of George Anderson's Yellowstone Angler Flyshop, that if things go smoothly, he expects construction to begin on a new five to six foot berm by the middle of August. First priority is to moderate the flow of water from the river through the spring creek channel, but not completely, since emptying it would kill the water weeds and insect life. One positive result of the flooding is that a lot of silt has been scoured out of the spring creek

bottom, and both Bob and George think that it will provide better holding water for trout than ever before. Most of the fish wound up in the pond in front of the DePuy house, and as the water levels go down, and the streams clear, they will move back into the upper channels.

Nelson's spring creek, off East River Road on the opposite side of the Yellowstone, was not affected by the floods. George wondered privately last year how the Nelsons would fare this season, since they raised their rates to \$75.00/day. Now, he says with a laugh: "Hell, they could charge \$200 a day this year and be full every day!"

There is still plenty of wonderful fishing in Paradise Valley. The big river is full of large, hungry trout, and the hopper fishing this August and September should be fabulous. Then there are the trophy lakes with enormous rainbows, Yellowstone Park not far away, Nelson's spring creek, Mill Creek for those who like to catch a lot of pan sized cutthroats, and smaller creeks less well known. In all likelihood, the DePuy's and O'Hair's water will bounce back from this bit of stress better than ever, and provide sport to visiting anglers for years to come.

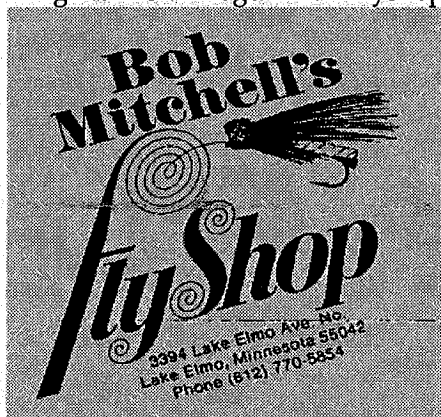
(condensed from an e-mail message from George Anderson)

## Skip's Loose Threads

by Skip James

Terrestrials tempt the palates of late season trout. As the number of hatches diminishes, and the size of the individual insects gets smaller and smaller, it is comforting to know that a size 12 grasshopper can turn a hatchless, riserless day into a memorable sporting experience. Ants, beetles, crickets and hoppers all abound in the grass overhanging the stream and in the trees shading it, and a gust of wind is all it takes to alter their flight plan and send one into the water with disastrous results. Brown trout especially are fond of undercut banks where they can lie in the shade, protected from predators, ready to pounce on any living thing that accidentally comes too close. Luckily, most of our local spring creeks, particularly the Rush River, have long expanses of weedbed filled cool water, with grassy banks just made for terrestrial fishing. So, after you've fished the morning Trico spinner fall, put away the 7x, replace it with 4x and a small hopper or cricket, and work the edges of the stream. If it's windy, use the hopper; if not, use an ant, beetle, or cricket. Most of my ant imitations are made of fur, in size 16 and 18. Of course there are foam imitations as well, complete with

rubber legs. They ride close in the film, so a bit of fluorescent yarn on top makes it easier to see them on the water. Beetles are available commercially only in basic black, either made from deer hair ala Ed Schenk, or out of closed cell foam. If you make your own, consider using black, short crystal chenille as an underbody. It has a wonderful, buggy glint to it. One of the problems with tying beetles from deer hair is that they're not very durable. One fish's teeth can make the fly look like it stuck its finger in a electrical socket! Instead of deer hair, try black Swiss Straw. It ties in just the same, and even has the same linear striations as a deer hair back. You'll have to add a few deer hair legs up front, though. There are many fine cricket patterns, usually tied on long shank hooks with a black dyed goose quill segment for the wing, an underbody of black fur, and a muddler like head of black deer hair, with many strands allowed to stream out over the back and sides to represent legs. Hoppers are tied the same way, in many colors and sizes, and in lots of variations. One of my favorite patterns is Bob Mitchell's original *Jolly Green Giant*, whose image forms the logo for the flyshop.



**Hook:** Mustad 9672 (or equivalent) #12

**Thread:** Brown 6/0

**Tail:** Clump of red deer hair tied very short.

**Abdomen:** Light green yarn (poly if you can find it), doubled over, the loop covering the deer hair tail. The body covers the rear two thirds of the hook shank.

**Ribbing:** Bright red hackle, palmered over the body, and then clipped to less than the gap of the hook.

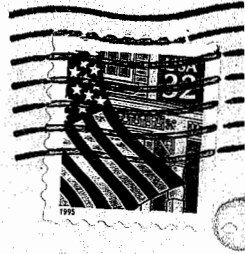
**Underwing:** bright yellow bucktail, on top of the shank, extending to the beginning of the hook bend.

**Overwing:** A clump of natural elkhair (grayish) or coastal deer extending over the yellow bucktail.

**Head:** Natural coastal deer, spun and clipped muddler fashion to produce a squarish profile.



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**DEADLINES**

OCT 9/15  
NOV 10/15  
DEC 11/15

Now on the Internet at:

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

**The St. Croix County  
Planning and Zoning  
Project.....**

issued a summary report on citizen attitudes towards development in the county. This survey of almost 1400 residents and property owners will be used by planners in making land use decisions.

*Changing land use is perhaps  
the greatest threat to our  
local streams.*

Copies of the report are available from:

Ellen Denzer  
St. Croix County Planning Department  
715-386-4673

or

Jill Janke  
St. Croix County UW-Extension,  
715-684-3301 or 715-425-4080.

