

RIPRAP

Newsletter of the KIAP-TU-WISH Chapter Volume 14 • Issue 2 November, 2020



CHAPTER MEETING

November's chapter meeting has been scheduled for November 4th via Zoom. Nate Anderson from the WI DNR will be bringing us up-todate on the habitat projects the Trout Crew worked on this past season, including Plum Creek and ERO structures on the South Fork of the Kinni, and plans for next season, including lower Cady Creek.

Watch for an email announcement of the meeting and the link to join. Hope to see you there!

RIPRAP

Restoration, Improvement & Preservation through Research & Projects.

Next deadline for article submission is December 14th. Send information to econ4664@gmail.com.

Spawning brook trout photo by Dennis Pratt, bruleriversportsmensclub.com Conserve

Protect

Restore

The Drift

WORDS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The Elephant in the Trout Stream

am struggling with what to write about in The Drift this month. In fact, I've been struggling with what to write about for weeks. I could write about the City of River Falls and FERC (Federal Electric Regulatory Commission) deciding to draw down the waters behind the Powell Falls Dam on the Kinni, in order to assess damage to the dam from the June 29, 2020 record-breaking flood. This is certainly significant and could speed up funding for the removal of the Powell Falls Dam. But that's not what I'm struggling with. I could write about the Kiap-TU-Wish board sending out our "Spring Appeal" letter in September, and urge you to be generous so that our chapter can continue doing stream habitat restoration and maintenance work. But I already know that you will be as generous as you are able. I could write about a friend and me getting up early on the last day of the inland trout season to drive 2 1/2 hours to fish a top secret trout stream, only to find out that Randy Arnold had gotten up earlier and beaten us to the spot! Even though (to be honest) this temporarily annoyed me, Randy and I made our angling peace and this isn't what I'm struggling with. Then again, I could write about the new, well-trampled down foot path going up and down the previously "top secret" streambank that we all experienced when we got there. There had NEVER been a path there before. There had never even been an inkling of a foot path there before, which was probably why it had been such a good fishing spot PRIOR to this year. Now THAT would be getting closer to the heart of what I've been struggling with. We'll just call it the Elephant in the Trout Stream.

The Elephant in the Trout Stream is similar to the Elephant in the Living Room that we've all been dealing with for the past seven or eight months, except that this Elephant happens to be in a Trout Stream! I don't know about you, but one of the things that attracts me to trout fishing is that it gets me away from the stresses of my life, whatever they might be at the time, by placing me into a coldwater stream, surrounding me with an abundance of natural sounds and smells and sights, and requiring me to concentrate hard, in order to catch and release a wary, beautiful, hard-to-catch quarry. Trout fishing helps me forget about the stressful, not-so-fun parts of life, by forcing me to concentrate intently on the beauty of the natural world. That's good for me. I believe that's good for all of us. Why haven't I been able to do that this year? It has been because of that blasted Elephant in the Trout Stream.

The trout season started this year with the Elephant shutting down our economy and forcing most students and workers to stay at home. This could have had a positive impact on my trout fishing and certainly did for some folks. Being a small business banker, I spent

the better part of the next three months helping customers obtain Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans from the Small Business Administration. This was very satisfying for a small business banker, because I was able to witness first hand how the vast majority of these funds really were used by small businesses to keep their employees employed and how these employees were able to keep food on their tables and make mortgage and other payments during an uncertain time.

When I finally got out to the trout streams in late June, however, I realized that not every trout angler had been a banker working on PPP loans during the shutdown. All of the local streams had end-of-the-season paths trampled along them. Angler parking lots were for the most part full and nearly every bridge access point had three to four cars parked on it. Worse yet, the trout had all either been educated beyond my ability, or thinned out. Probably a little of both. I probably got skunked more times than in the year I started trout fishing. The silver lining behind all this was my having to explore farther and farther out for places with less fishing pressure and more dumb trout. I did find places farther out and I did find a few dumb trout. But then those places were discovered by other anglers, and I had to go even farther out where I found more dumb trout again. My peace was restored. However, never did I imagine that the Elephant would cause fishing pressure to be so great that trout anglers would drive 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours (or more if they were from the Twin Cities) out into the middle of nowhere to fish, until Randy, my friend and I experienced the well-worn foot path and well-educated, thinned out trout on the last day of the season.

So, how does one manage a thriving chapter of Trout Unlimited when there's an Elephant in the Trout Stream? If you happen to

know, the board and I are certainly open to your suggestions and ideas. Some activities, like stream monitoring, advocacy for the removal of the River Falls Dams on the Kinni, and DNR habitat project planning meetings are either able to be accomplished by individuals, or have evolved into video conferencing and greater use of social media to keep plowing forward. Some activities, like volunteer work days and our Trout-in-the Classroom programs can continue with a few minor adjustments. But that darn Elephant in the Trout Stream, and the necessary precautions and public health directives that come along with him, have made our other activities, like monthly chapter meetings, the annual conservation banquet, fly-fishing clinics, fly tying get-togethers, and just about any other activity that involves "getting together", socially irresponsible or even illegal for us to sponsor.

We're all in this together. We're all dealing with the same Elephant in our living rooms and collectively with the same Elephant in our Trout Streams. As your chapter president and as a board, we need your help. In particular, we need a social media-savvy person with coldwater conservation passion to serve as chair of our Communications Committee. If that might be you, please contact me. You will have a lot of help and support from the board in all areas, except maybe for the social media-savvy part. And we need your help in a lot of other areas, too. We all need to join together to keep Kiap-TU-Wish a thriving coldwater conservation chapter. Call or email your board members with your suggestions and ideas. That's what we're here for. Call (715-781-6874) or email me (jswagner@bremer.com) with your suggestions. And if you are going steelhead fishing, or ocean fishing, or someplace with year-round fishing, Happy Angling! Scott



From the Editor

"All the leaves are brown, and the sky is grey." If this rings a bell you're probably a child of the 60s, or someone with an older brother or sister who listened with their friends, gathered around a record player stacked with 45s, to the Mamas and Papas, the Beatles, or the Beach Boys, to name a few. But I digress. As one ages I think the tendency is to become more reflective. In days past I looked upon the end of the trout season with doom and gloom. Now I see it as a beginning, a new start to new adventures, new streams to fish, and bigger trout to catch. We can only hope that much of what we are experiencing now will be behind us when the traditional 2021 season begins. I'm still a "glass half full" guy, so I hope that while reading this November edition of RIPRAP, you come across an article or two that will bring a smile to your face or teach you something you didn't know, and in the end will have you thinking about all the good things ahead.

Speaking of good things ahead, this issue of RIPRAP contains something for everyone. If you're a traditionalist and read from front to back you've already enjoyed the musings of our illustrious president as he laments about "The Elephant in the Trout Stream" and the failed quest to find peace and tranquility when wetting a line. Kent and John update us on their monitoring activities and TU's partnership with MobileH2O in the development of the WiseH2O app, which allows us to monitor water quality and habitat conditions in our Driftless Area trout streams. From behind his vise, Paul Johnson insists that tying your own flies is cheaper than buying them and reminds us to temper our-selves when purchasing tying materials. Our beloved Judy Lutter shares a wonderful profile of artist Joshua Cunningham, with his thoughts about painting and why he continues to generously support our chapter's fund-raising efforts. For you science buffs, Nate Anderson and Loren Haas offer enlightenment into the many nuances of stream restoration; Loren even includes some anecdotal information on the physics involved. (Lucky for us he didn't offer any equations on "fluvial" dynamics.) Our famed "coulee chaser" Bob Trevis continues his treatise on beginning fly fishing and offers proven suggestions about getting on the right path to becoming a good fly caster. John Lawrence, a first-time and I hope not last-time contributor, writes about the dilemma of compromising one's principles in order to prevent a skunking. Lastly, Scott Hanson provides us with an innovative cranefly larva pattern that involves the use of hemp cord and squirrel with a bit of weight thrown in for good measure. That pretty much wraps it up; have a good read! Ed

Stream Monitoring

Kent Johnson and John Kaplan

t was a busy summer for the Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring team. Chapter members deployed 30 temperature loggers in five local rivers, to evaluate the impacts of stormwater runoff, hydropower facilities, and climate change, and to assess the ability of our stream restoration projects to improve temperature regimes.

Water samples were collected and analyzed on several streams (see photo), to better understand watershed impacts on water quality. To complement stream temperature and water chemistry data, two weather stations were operated, providing data on air temperature, relative humidity, dew point, and rainfall amounts. Kiap-TU-Wish also continued to provide financial and volunteer monitoring support for USGS operation and maintenance of their Kinnickinnic River and Willow River flow gaging stations.

National Trout Unlimited is placing a high priority on Community Science and the benefits it provides for angler education and coldwater resource management. Trout Unlimited's national science team partnered with MobileH2O, LLC to develop a customized mobile application (WiseH2O App) that can be used by anglers to monitor water quality and habitat conditions in Driftless Area trout streams. In 2019, Kiap-TU-Wish anglers participated in a successful WiseH2O App pilot project, testing the App on 10 local streams and rivers, making 83 observations, and providing feedback to the developers on App improvements. The MobileH2O website: www.mobileh2o.com/anglerscience provides access to the Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring plan, the 2019 pilot project report, and an interactive map that enables viewing of all 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish WiseH2O App observations.

COVID-19 and development of the iPhone version of the WiseH2O App delayed the start of the 2020 monitoring season until early August. Although the 2020 monitoring season will be short, we are pleased to report that the iPhone version of the App is available, and the 2-in-1 test strips can be used to measure nitrite/nitrate concentrations. The App also has an updated look and educational messaging that should be more user-friendly. Given the success of the 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish pilot project, and with further App improvements in 2020, WiseH2O App monitoring expanded to the entire Driftless Area (southwestern WI, southeastern MN, northeastern IA, and northwestern IL) in early August. Besides Kiap-TU-Wish, 14 additional Trout Unlimited chapters now have an opportunity to monitor our regional coldwater resources. For more information on the Driftless Area project, please contact Kent Johnson at **d.kent.johnson@gmail.com.**



Views from this Side of My Vise

PAUL JOHNSON

would like to take a few minutes and work through this with you. When I am teaching a tying class to new fly tyers, I typically start out with a Pink Squirrel. Why? Because it starts with some basic tying techniques, especially applying dubbing, that we can build on with other patterns. It is also a great fly that always seems to catch fish.

For my tying, the most expensive materials are hooks, tungsten beads and good dry fly hackle. Hackle used to be reasonably priced until some goofball started wearing feathers in his hair on a TV show. After that, all the gals had our fly tying feathers tied up on their heads and the prices skyrocketed. They have recovered some, but not nearly to where they were priced before.

If you want to tie up some Pink Squirrels, you will need hooks, beads, thread, wire, flash, squirrel dubbing for the abdomen and pink dubbing for the collar. Other than the hooks and bead, the rest of the materials are pretty inexpensive. For me, I figure it costs about 30 cents for the materials to tie a single fly. Keep in mind that you will also need to invest in a tying vise and other tools that will help you with your tying. You will also need to invest your time in learning how to tie and spending the time actually tying the flies.

So, with proper restraint, it can be cheaper to tie flies than to buy them. What you need to watch for is buying tying materials that you do not need. Figure out what flies you want to learn to tie and shop just for the materials for those flies.

After reading this, you might be thinking that it just makes more sense for you to buy flies. What you cannot buy, or for that matter put a price on, is how it feels to catch the first fish on a fly that you tied by yourself. That's what the MasterCard ads call "priceless".

"Tying your own flies can be cheaper than buying them." "I have contributed a painting for the last three years as gratitude to the chapter for providing me with new places to paint."

Artist Profile: Joshua Cunningham 💷

JUDY MAHLE LUTTER

April Morning Joshua Cunningham

This year's virtual banquet will provide numerous challenges and means that those buying raffle tickets to win a painting donated by Joshua Cunningham, entitled "April Morning," will not have the delight of talking to him about his work. Hopefully my interview will offer some insights into Joshua's personality and inspire you to enjoy his painting with even more appreciation.

Joshua is a landscape artist and speaks passionately of how deeply connected he has become to the land and water through his paintings. His paintings have won many awards and are featured in numerous galleries. One in particular, "Winter Along the Trimbelle," was selected this year by the Minnesota State Fair's juried art show and can be viewed on Joshua's <u>website</u>.

"I have contributed a painting for the last three years as gratitude to the chapter for providing me with new places to paint. Pine Creek is something of a touchstone for me." It is one of the streams that Kiap-TU-Wish has restored and one of the places Joshua goes frequently to paint.

As a kid growing up in rural Isanti county, he occassionally fished. His connection with our chapter grew as he continually met fly fishers along the streams. He discovered the Trimbelle in 2008 and has done close to 50 paintings at sites along County Road O in Pierce County.

The restricted movement we all endured during the early months of Covid 19 meant Joshua could not get out with his easel and paints. Once it became possible to travel and paint again he says he has been painting more than usual, which is truly a gift during this stressful time

Joshua almost always paints on location and frequently completes his work in one session. He describes his painting method as "making haste with great care, and in the five or six hours I am painting, the scene is constantly changing. The sun changes, the shadows change and trying to capture what is happening beyond me is a continual challenge and delight." Joshua feels that each painting and setting provides new variables but also new opportunities for learning and deepening his understanding of the world.

In a spirit of gratitude, Joshua is once again donating a painting that has great meaning for him. One of his mentors, John Crosby, suggested that if someone makes a donation, they should donate a painting that is hard to part with, not one that has lingered on the for-sale shelf. This year's donation, "April Morning," was created at the recently opened Truttmann easement on the Trimbelle. For Joshua, it was like walking around in his paintings, especially being able to walk into an area that he had painted from many angles over the last dozen years. In this painting, an "April morning came together with my affection for painting along the Trimbelle, and my appreciation for all the work done by Kiap-TU-Wish."

Joshua hopes that people seeking to win his painting will feel as if it is they have walked into the scene and it will serve as a reminder of their oneness with nature and beauty. "I'm not sure that the Kiap-TU-Wish volunteers, working as hard as they do on maintaining habitat and creating new places to fish, realize that they are touching lives of people like me who use the resources in different ways." He believes that his paintings have a life of their own and that those who buy or show his paintings continue to spread that joy and beauty. It's something we all need to do a little bit more of.

Be sure to check out Joshua's website, <u>Joshuacunningham.com</u>. In addition to enjoying and appreciating his work, his descriptions of how and when his works were painted will provide additional delight.

here are a lot of different ways to approach restoring a stream bank and in this article I will discuss how we, the WDNR, approach the restoration of a "typical eroding" bank during a trout habitat project.

Usually our habitat projects begin with volunteers cutting unwanted and invasive trees which include box elder and buckthorn. The remaining stumps are left at about 3 feet high. Leaving the stumps at this height enables the heavy equipment operator to see them if they are covered with snow or hidden by summer vegetation. We use heavy equipment to pull the stumps and sometimes use them as in-stream habitat features.

The downed trees are cut into pieces and the logs, small branches, and surrounding underbrush are stacked and burned. I'm sure those of you who have been to one of these brushing workdays can remember the sounds of buzzing chain saws and the smell of brush fire smoke filling the air.

Once the stumps are pulled from the ground, all the excess soil is shaken from the roots. They are then piled to be burned at a later time or burried in deep holes outside of the flood plain. We also use the excavator bucket as a rake to gather all the growing and dead vegetation from the surrounding area. The vegetation is either burried or burned leaving only soil on the stream bank.The next step in the process is separating the topsoil from the rest of the soil and saving it for later in the process where it will be used to cover up the rock that is placed to stabilize the bank.

Once we have the topsoil separated, we then need to grade the bank. Generally, we are working with steep vertical banks that are actively eroding. Grading involves pulling excess dirt away from the bank's edge in order to achieve a 3:1 or 4:1 flatter slope. A 3:1 slope, for example, means that for every 1 foot you go up from the waters edge, you go back 3 feet. Sometimes banks will be graded steeper in order to prevent damage to the roots of trees growing close to the stream.

Our goal is to blend everything in so that when the water rises over the stream bank following a weather event, it will flow onto the floodplain throughout the valley floor, ultimately reducing its velocity and minimizing any subsequent damage to the stream banks. Less disturbance means less destruction. With increased bank height comes an increase in extra dirt. We use this dirt to fill in low spots or we may shave off the high spots in order to allow water to flow easily over the banks.

Once the bank is sloped, we protect the toe (where the water meets the bottom of the bank) with rock, either shot rock or rip rap. Riprap is a processed rock that is usually 3"-18" in diameter, whereas shot rock is the resulting slag that remains following the blasting of a rock wall with dynamite. Blasting results in different sizes of rock that include fines (very small rock) to large boulders. Our habitat crew likes to use shot rock in order to reduce voids in the placed rock and prevent water from seeping in and eroding the finer substrate; that if left unchecked could result in a domino effect of falling rock.

In some cases we might add rock to the stream bed in order to narrow up overly wide shallow areas while in other streams, the toe can be pulled back and replaced with rock. On average, we use 1 ton of rock per foot of stream. The average size dump truck can haul 20 tons of rock, and one dump truck full of rock can protect about 20 feet of streambank. In addition to adding rock to the bank, we also add trout habitat within the bank by either adding wood such as root wads, or adjusting our rock placement to create little nooks and crannies where trout can hide and feed. By placing rock on the stream bank we are able to create a channel within a channel that results in meanders within the





stream giving it a more natural look. The added rock not only protects the stream bank, it also narrows the stream and increases its velocity which helps to flush out the fine sediments. As a result, the natural substrate is exposed and used by trout for foraging and spawning. Rock can also be used to create deep over-winter pool habitat as well.

After all the rock is placed and a slope and smooth surface is achieved, we next cover up the rock with a thin layer of topsoil, reaching down to the waters edge, created while initially grading the bank. We then use the bucket of the excavator or drive on the rock with its tracks to smooth the bank out in order to assure everything is meshed together. To create the new stream bank a skid steer or excavator is used to spread out a thin layer of topsoil to completely cover the rock.

After the soil is placed and blended into the existing bank, we seed and mulch. We use a turf mixture and clover to get vegetation established quickly in order to protect the banks and add a native planting mix in as well. The turf grass mixture and native plants have deep root systems that help lock everything in, ultimately creating a very sturdy streambank when blended with rock and good topsoil.

Finally, we purchase small square straw bales from a local farmer and use them as mulch on top of the seed and protection against runoff, while retaining needed moisture for the newly spread grass seed.

If you haven't volunteered yet to help out on a mulching day, it's a great way to break a sweat, get a bunch of dust in your nose or lose a boot in the mud; but you can always turn around to look at the work and get a great sense of accomplishment for what the group did in a few short hours that will ultimately last a lifetime.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Nate Anderson is a Fisheries Management-Habitat Specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. He's the lead guy largely responsible for turning our damaged and eroding trout stream banks into eye-catching environmental successes; which provide each of us with wonderful places to cast a line. Oh, and lest I forget, his and his crew's work, creates a pretty darned good place for our precious trout to live in as well.







Elevated Riparian Optimization (ERO) structures: What are they?

This is kind of a technical question. I will try to avoid the physics lesson in my explanation.

t starts with heavy sand loads from 100-year storms occurring, seemingly every 6 or 7 years. In 2020 we witnessed 3 individual storms that dumped over 4 inches of rain with the epicenter of the storms within 150 miles of each other. With every major rain event, tons of sand are moved from the highlands to the valleys and much of it ends up in our trout streams. Many streams, particularily those containing brook trout, are small and move much too slowly to endure the onslaught of the resulting sand load. The job description of a stream is to move the mountains to the ocean one grain of sand at a time. Most small streams can't keep up with a constant influx of sand and a number of previously renovated streams have again filled in. It takes a specific amount of water, at a specific velocity, to move the sand and sustain deep scoured streams.

Sand is a desert, and few insects can live and reproduce in it. When introduced into a stream it can easily fill in man-made lunker structures, naturally occurring deep holes, and pocket water. Lacking food and deep-water hibernaculum to winter in, brook trout die or are forced to move down stream to bigger water. Typically, brown trout inhabit and dominate the lower big water stretches of our streams making it difficult for the brookies to compete and survive.

After witnessing many small renovated streams fill in with sand, I began looking for a solution to this problem. It took many days on skinny water, lugging equipment up and down stream, and recording multiple water velocity readings in order to to find some possible answers. Occasionally I found extremely large deep-holes and deep flats on very small streams. At the same time, I observed pools and deep flats on renovated streams that were either filled or in the process of filling in with sand. Three main factors were related to this difference; the velocity of the water, the width of the stream, and the shape of the banks. The compromised streams needed some type of constrictor, choke point, or narrowing to accelerate the water and scour the sand away. The name I chose for this structure was Elevated Riparian Optimization (ERO). It is a type of Bernoulli structure that narrows the stream, increases its velocity, elevates the riparian, and optimizes the force of the water. Anything that narrows a river or stream is technically using the Bernoulli principle. Credit Bernoulli, he was a genius. That's it for physics, I promise.

Once I had the concept for the structure in my head, I just couldn't let it go. I would talk about it to anyone who would listen. This kind of explains why for two years, nobody would have lunch with me. My apologies.

At a meeting with personnel from the WDNR, NRCS, County Soil Conservation, TU DARE, and Kiap-TU-Wish, we received permission to install five experimental ERO structures on Hay Creek in Dunn county. Jeff Kitelinger from NRCS provided the first drawings of these structures. Using the drawings as a guide, we aggressively narrowed the stream in specific locations and rather than pulling back the banks, elevated the riparian with large rock During low water or normal water flows there is little noticeable effect, but when torrential rains fall, the added water volume and subsequent increased velocity potentially provides enough energy to scour sand from the stream. Within two weeks post installation we got our first rain event on-site. It washed out a lot of stream bank grass seed, but it also demonstrated the structures would work. The result was deep water habitat for about 20 feet or more downstream of the ERO.

We are still in the experimental stages with these ERO structures, but so far results have been positive. Brook trout need year-round habitat. As proof, a subsequent electro-shocking survey by Kasey Yallaly with the WDNR, revealed Hay Creek brookies are already using the deep water for cover and there are more of them with better size.





A side benefit of the ERO structure is the insect population within the structure. The fast water and cobble-sized rock that dominates just up and downstream of the structure is perfect insect habitat. Lifting one rock reveals hundreds of confused insects squirming around wondering where their water source suddenly went. Replacing the rock exactly where it was found ensures healthy insect populations, and well-fed trout.

As a result of sand deposition in recent years, brook trout populations have plummeted in the South Fork of the Kinni. In early October, Nate Anderson of the WDNR installed nine ERO structures on the South Fork. Sand started moving immediately—the true potential of the new ERO structures won't be realized until next year's major rain events.

Sand load is only one of the problems on the South Fork; beavers are another. The remains of a beaver dam can slow water velocity and retain sand indefinitely. This can be rectified by total removal of all dam remnants. If you come upon an ERO structure plugged with debris, please clear it as best you can and please report any beaver activity to the WDNR.

The South Fork continues to be choked by willow saplings growing out over the water. Besides making it impossible to fish, willows slow the water down during high water stages, ultimately forcing the sand out of suspension, allowing it to aggregate on the bottom.

It takes volunteer labor to fix these problems. So when a notice for a work day on the South Fork of the Kinni is announced by Randy Arnold, please answer his call to help reclaim this treasure of a stream not only for your continued enjoyment but most importantly for the preservation of its brook trout population.





Hay Creek ERO structures showing the high water mark after major rain event



EDITOR'S NOTE: Loren Haas is a Kiap-TU-Wish board member and much involved in our chapter's stream restoration projects. He received his Bachelor's degree from U.W. Stout. His knowledge of fluvial dynamics has been garnered from his career in industry, his own research, and through interactions with like-minded individuals. In looking back, Loren tells of fishing brook trout while growing up in Wisconsin. "Many of the smaller streams had under-sized single lane bridge-crossings with the best deep holes under and just downstream of them. I called it road fishing — driving from bridge to bridge to find brook trout. The same forces that formed holes under bridges are at work in the ERO structures." The inovative restoration projects depicted in Loren's article are testament to his remarkable expertise in water dynamics and velocities and how they can be used to further the quality of our endangered streams and fish populations.

Beginning Flyfishing Part Two: Casting

BOB TREVIS



"After my brother and I became good fishermen, we realized that our father was not a great fly caster, but he was accurate and stylish and wore a glove on his casting hand. As he buttoned his glove in preparation to giving us a lesson, he would say, It is an art that is performed on a four-count rhythm between ten and two o'clock." Norman Maclean, A River Runs Through It

n part one of this series, I described the equipment you would need to fish for trout and stressed the importance of putting together a balanced system, one that would allow you to eventually become a successful fly angler. The next rung on the ladder to success is learning how to cast.

Trying to learn on your own can be a real adventure, and I would recommend not trying to do so. Be patient, resist the temptation to just head off with rod in hand to your back yard, or worse yet, to a river. Wait, at least until you understand the basic mechanics of the cast. Otherwise, unless you are fortunate enough to have great natural coordination, you will probably just flail around and perhaps even give up on fly fishing altogether.

Checking with your local fly shop would be a good place to start; they usually offer casting clinics with highly qualified instructors. If you do not have a fly shop nearby, try to enlist the help of a friend who fly fishes or at the very least you could study a number of how-to fly-casting videos on YouTube. Joan Wulff has an excellent series on how to cast.

Regular practice will accelerate your learning curve. Find a nice treeless, grassy area. Avoid hard surfaces like your driveway or a parking lot; they can wreak havoc on your newly purchased fly line. Set up paper plates for targets at 20, 25, and 30-foot distances (the range the majority of trout are caught in). You can use a bit of yarn on the end of your leader to mimic a dry fly.

Accuracy is most important so be aware of and get comfortable with the rhythm between your rod and yourself. It's pure joy when the synchronization suddenly kicks in and the rod and line send your fly – almost effortlessly – to where you want it to land. And lastly, set a 20-minute time limit for each session so you don't end up with a sore arm.

Once you become comfortable with casting, find a stream or lake where you can start to work on basic fly angling skills such as line management, line mending, roll-casting, and when on moving water, learn to fish both up and downstream. Practice retrieving line, hook setting, playing the fish to net, and how to give your quarry a proper release. If you decide to fish a lake or pond, fish from shore or wade the shallows for sunfish or crappies, catching them is loads of fun. A side-benefit might even be some tasty panfish for supper!

Years back, my friend Phil Eldred and I co-taught fly-fishing classes for the Women in the Outdoors program. "Students" signed up for one of our 3-hour sessions which focused on fly-fishing basics and fly-casting. We held four classes a year, each averaging 9-10 students. Over the course of nine years we taught close to 325 would-be fly anglers how to become comfortable and capable with the concept and practice of fly-casting. Our "Graduates" – even those with floppy-wrist syndrome – then had the opportunity to spend a morning or afternoon on Torkelson Creek, and some (not all) caught their first trout. But most importantly they did learn to cast and retrieve on moving water, and many of them are still fly-fishing today.

Illustration by Anthony Ravielli that first appeared in Sports Illustrated's three-part series entitled "The Art of Fishing the Wet Fly" SI, 28 Mar. 1960

A Dilemma Runs Through It: Which "Road" to take?

JOHN LAWRENCE

A t the outset, I wish to declare that I am unabashedly a traditionalist when it comes to fly fishing. As such, I've questioned the methods of "high sticking" aficionados and extended similar denunciations to those current partakers of the more recent Tenkara and Euro nymphing fads. To those who have said to my face or silently in disgust that I'm a snob or stubborn in the extreme, I say what's wrong with being principled and staying the course? Then an opportunity came my way to fish a secret spot and with it a catalyst for some serious reflection.

To begin, a good fishing buddy of mine, Fred, suggested we explore a place deep in Pierce County. His friend Craig had highly recommended this spot to him and Fred was eager to try it. Under the impression I had never fished there and knowing Craig gives good tips to those he likes, (He likes Fred.) I suggested we head over and try the water. Braving ninety plus temps and mid-sixty humidity readings, the following day we did just that.

Hitting the water with what was now his normal routine, Fred quickly had it all figured out. As proof I watched him hook and release a couple of browns in very short order. Those large dry caddis attractors trailed by one of his patented Perdigon or Walt's Worm ties were his recipe for success. For me, as has sadly been the case of late, it took much longer to figure things out. "Longer" this time around was an hour and half and included my best finesse work while casting to

an assortment of choice runs, riffles, and deep bends. All for naught. Not so much as a strike much less a hook-up unless you're one of those who includes snagged sticks and dredged-up weeds in your overall "fish" count.

My last time out, which seemed ages ago because it really was that long ago, I got skunked

and that fact now weighed heavily on me. In my defense, patches of snow were still on the ground back then and it really was a challenge to get a decent drift under the shore ice which still hung from the banks of that favorite brook trout creek. Still, a skunk is a skunk and, for the life of me, I honestly can't remember the last time I was skunked on two successive outings. Undeterred and now determined beyond measure, I persevered as I continued working my way upstream.

Another 50 yards had me coming to an "S" in the river where the water narrowed. The current markedly increased to "fast" with a few spots having good depth. A downed tree made the best holding water unfishable unless I stood directly overhead and attached an ounce or two of lead to help get my fly down to where a trout might see it. Ten yards up, I noticed a slight indentation in the bank and a resulting eddy that neatly separated the fast flow in front from the two feet of still water behind. Remembering the adage to never pass a foam line without throwing at least a couple casts, I paused, as this sweet spot was "big fish" holding water.

Considering my fishing options for this particular seam, memories of another friend's 10' Winston, "cane pole" came to mind with Fred's latest, "you only live once," Euro "stick" of a lifetime following that. Then there were the haunted echoes of my numerous, past snide comments, about the Leisenring Lift and other "highsticking" variations of fishing nymphs. But hey, I was batting zero for the morning and knew that the placid water on the other side of that foam line held, at the very least, one premium brown if not a small pod of them if they chose to not practice social distancing.

So here I was, at another impasse in life, albeit this time with regard to my preferred method of chasing trout with a fly. Which "Road" to

My mind raced. Euro nymphing? Leisenring Lift? High sticking?

take? Long story short, out came the weight and onto my leader went the largest split shot I carry. Spooling out maybe a whole 8 feet of line, I got down to business with my best "chuck and duck" presentation. My third pass saw my line go tight and my rod curve with that predictable thumping of a nice brown. Downstream I went in my tug-of-war to keep the fish away from that fallen tree. While I was able to turn it, I never did get a sighting as my first brown of the morning wisely turned the tables on me as it practiced its own version of long-distance release. Still, I awarded myself a half point for a legitimate hook up and this one more than qualified. Back to that foam line I trod and a few casts later my second brown of the day was briefly in hand before its release. When the next few casts came up empty, further upstream I waded.

I never did make it all the way to that deep pool destination I had in mind, but in my defense, the day was wicked hot, my Gatorade was

> gone, and neither Fred nor I had made a commitment to fish past noon. Passing that foam line on my way back, I couldn't resist. And for good measure, I added a second split shot to the mix, equal in size to the first. Even with the rush of the current and my hearing impairment thrown in for good measure, with that much weight, it wasn't at all difficult to hear

the distinct kerplunk and witness the splash as my rig hit the water. Three more hook sets followed in close order with two more fish to the hand. My mind raced. Euro nymphing? Leisenring Lift? High sticking? Whatever name you choose, it was the recipe for success that morning. With my moral precepts and fly-fishing principles in drastic need of a re-education, I was admittedly a psychologist's prime example of cognitive dissonance working its magic. Later, I managed two more browns, but only one was taken the way I prefer catching trout – by shooting 30 to 50 feet of line quartered upstream with the hook set as the fly floated back down. All the rest? All but that one using the heavy metal.

As I now sit reflecting on yesterday's outing, Fred was his usual, gracious self as we compared fishing notes. Say what you want, he encouraged, Euro nymphing is an effective method that catches fish. I'm now left to wonder what he was silently saying to himself as his nonjudgmental words soothed my soul. (Then again, knowing Fred as I've had the good fortune of doing these past few years, maybe that's all he really was thinking? He really is a class act.) Fred does have an extra Euro rod and has kindly offered to teach me the ropes if I have any desire to learn. He even sweetened the deal to start me off on the right foot by offering to make me my own Euro leader. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't thinking about it. Then again, I'm also thinking about that age-old joke of the two guys in the rowboat fishing, one with a pole, the other with dynamite. I'll leave it up to each of you to figure out how this one ends.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Lawrence has informed me that Fred's offer to teach him how to Euro nymph was no longer on the table — Fred has since broken that second rod.

4 X 100 "Chance" Offerings This year, Kiap-TU-Wish is offering 100 "chances" on four premium items in place of the traditional raffle normally offered at our Holiday Conservation Banquet. Purchase a "chance" for an item of interest or better yet, for \$50 purchase a chance on all four. One in a hundred is great odds, way better than the lottery, and of course buying more tickets makes this even better. Members wanting to purchase tickets can contact Tom Schnadt at, <u>thschnad@hotmail.com</u> or by mobile phone, 651.245.5163. The drawing will take place February 28th or sooner.



April Morning

A framed original painting by award winning artist Joshua Cunningham created at the recently opened Truttmann easement on the Trimbelle. The painting is $9'' \times 12''$ oil on linen and is valued at \$1,000. 100 chances at \$10 per chance.



Thomas & Thomas "Heirloom" series fly rod Built using high-tech glass fibers, the Heirloom Series was designed to replicate bamboo's classic action. Model FR763-3, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -3 wt. Features an Olive Blank, Western grip, & Uplocking reel seat. New value: \$760. 100 chances at \$10 per chance.



Yeti 45 Tundra Cooler Outside 16 $\frac{1}{8}'' \times 15 \frac{3}{8}'' \times 25 \frac{3}{4}''$ Inside 9 $\frac{3}{8}'' \times 10 \frac{5}{8}'' \times 18 \frac{3}{8}''$ Empty weight 23 pounds 100 chances at \$10 per chance. Retail value: \$400.



Norling Bamboo Rod 5-wt, 7'-6"rod with two tips, agate guides, rod sock & brushed aluminum travel tube with brass cap by renowned rod makers Dave Norling Sr. & Dave Norling Jr. 100 chances at \$20 per chance. Retail value: \$1,800.



Hemp Cranefly Larva

Hook: Daiichi 1260 or 1760, size 10 Bead: 7/64" or 1/8", black or bronze Weight: Lead wire, .015 inches Abdomen: Hemp bracelet cord, twisted Thorax: Natural Fox Squirrel dubbing





Cverywhere I look I see craneflies. Perhaps it is because my kids also see them, and they invariably give a shout-out (or maybe it's more of a scream-out) whenever they see a large, gangly-legged, daddy long legs-esque insect fluttering around the kitchen. For some reason they seem to get into our house more easily than most other bugs, so I oftentimes am tasked with extricating them in the fastest way possible. Craneflies must be quite widespread, as they not only frequent our house, but you can also see them fluttering around most of our local trout streams all summer long.

Historically, craneflies have taken a backseat to the less-gangly aquatic insects, such as mayflies, caddisflies, and stone flies, but in recent years they seem to have gained some acceptance amongst fly tyers. The larval form of the cranefly has been described as a sort-of miniature banana-like creature, which is somewhat accurate. If you have cringed at the arrival of the Mop Fly in recent years, you may feel more accepting of them when told that a cream colored Mop Fly actually isn't a bad cranefly larva imitation. I haven't completely embraced the Mop Fly craze myself, but I have developed another pretty good cranefly larva imitation using hemp cord. I happened upon the hemp cord in the bracelet parts aisle of my local giant craft store, so I grabbed up a spool, not knowing exactly what I would use it for. After some hemp-infused caddis larva pupae looked too fat for my liking, I decided the cord was the perfect size for a cranefly larva. And, Voila!, the Hemp Cranefly Larva was born.

If you like the looks of it, grab yourself a spool of hemp cord and tie a few. And if you they don't catch any fish, use the rest of the cord to make some bracelets. What have you got to lose?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for an upcoming article by Scott in the Winter issue of Fly Tyer Magazine.

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HAP LUTTER MEMORIAL SPECIAL FALL APPEAL

Early this fall, due to the impact of Covid 19, the Kiap-TU-Wish board made the difficult decision to cancel the chapter's annual holiday fund-raising event and the annual spring appeal. Instead, the board decided to conduct a special fall appeal to help mitigate the loss of funds from these two main fundraisers. To date, response to this special appeal has been extremely positive.

If you are still considering making a donation you can do so with a contribution, as a check, an on-line donation using the chapter's website, an employee match, or stock gift. And don't forget, your contribution is tax deductible. Thank you for sharing Hap's vision by supporting Western Wisconsin's cold-water fisheries!



