



RipRap

Newsletter of the
Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter
Volume 15 • Issue 2
November 2021



RIPRAP

Restoration, Improvement &
Preservation through Research
& Projects.

CHAPTER MEETING

Where: Best Western Campus Inn/
Juniors, River Falls, WI
When: December 1st
6:00 pm dinner (on your own dime)
7:00 pm - announcements followed
by the program

Program: "Global Warming Effects
on Trout in Western Streams," by
Matthew Mitro, WDNR

Spawning brown trout picture
by Dennis Pratt

Conserve

Protect

Restore

The Drift

This being the November issue of RipRap, with Thanksgiving on the horizon, I thought I would list some things I am thankful for. First, I am thankful for you, the members of Kiap-TU-Wish and your unwavering support and generosity. You are what make this chapter so great and I am honored to serve as your president. The number of projects that we accomplish together each year is so impressive: stream restoration, education, monitoring — none would be possible without your time and donations. Second, I am so thankful for Kasey and Nate. We have established such a good relationship and a true partnership with our hardworking DNR fisheries biologist, habitat specialist, and their crews. It is a pleasure working with them. Third, I am thankful for the abundant wild trout resources in our area. I still have to pinch myself, knowing that in 15 minutes, I can have my boots wet in one of the top trout rivers in the nation — besides having over a dozen or more top-notch streams within an hour's drive. I lived in the Chicago area for 4.5 years during grad school and believe me you miss that nearness! A good part of the reason we have those wild trout streams circles back to you!

This summer my family made it back to Colorado, to see family and spend time in the mountains. Since I have excellent fishing back home I don't fish out West for the catching, rather it's the change in scenery I enjoy most. I can't tell you the number of strikes I missed when standing in the Middle Fork of the South Platte, stealing a peek every few seconds as the sun slid down behind Mt. Sherman, the colors of the ever-changing sky merging from orange to red to purple to blue. Finally, I just reeled in and grabbed a seat on the river bank. While watching the show before me, I started to think about the contrast of the fishing in Colorado with what I experience back home. It is certainly fun for a while to catch fish on a colorful foam...whatchamacallit on a size 8 hook, but I soon miss the challenge of our well-fed trout that would laugh at such an abomination. In speaking with native anglers and fly-shop owners earlier in the day, I learned that the local TU chapters were working hard, not on habitat projects, but instead with lawyers and efforts to raise the monies needed to pay them for work on securing water rights. Very important work, but quite different to the more hands-on work we do. With the seemingly endless drought, unless the river flows from an impoundment, most rivers in Colorado were too warm to fish, so you can imagine the number of people fishing below the impoundments. Luckily, there are a lot of impoundments.

We certainly have our challenges here, including rising temperatures and flooding, but it seems like our issues are more manageable. You should never peek over the fence, look at your neighbor's back yard, and think you know them. However, the ongoing issue of drought and its related problems out West seems as big and vast as the landscape. All in all, I am thankful to call this area home. Besides, as my father said, when I asked as a 14-year-old if we could move to West Yellowstone, "If we did that, where would we go on vacation?"

From the Editor



Winter will soon be upon us. But before we become victims of its icy grip and fall into a semi-state of depression, let's grab a cup of Joe or some soothing herbal tea, or maybe even two fingers of J.T.S. Brown bourbon, and take a few minutes to reminisce about the highs and lows of this past trout season.

For me, the highs outweighed the lows by a wide margin. First off, I started my season much earlier than ever before. The low snow cover and seemingly warmer daytime temps made for easier stream access and fewer frozen guides and frosty fingers. Come to think of it, I rarely wore my over-priced winter fishing gloves.

And it never hurts to have a fishing partner who's willing to brave the conditions with you. It's like having a walking or exercise partner; sometimes a little nudge is all you need to get started. There's a saying that "misery loves company," but none of my winter season excursions were miserable. In fact, they were extremely fulfilling, and the beer at the end of the day wrap-up was always cold (but, I admit, not very warming).

The spring season made me promise myself that, for the rest of the season, I would strive to fish streams other than those I usually frequent. I made this decision after a presentation by Kasey Yallaly (our esteemed WDNR fishing biologist) at the May 2021 chapter meeting. Kasey encouraged us to broaden our horizons and try fishing unfamiliar water and noted that this would help lessen the pressure being put on our most popular streams—the Kinni, Rush, and Trimble.

So, being a good soldier, I did exactly what Kasey suggested. Each outing was preceded by much anticipation plus a dash or two of doubtfulness. Full disclosure: I did sneak away once in a while to more familiar waters. My decision to seek new waters, however, was rewarded with some of the best fishing I've experienced in a great while. Yes, these streams were tough to fish at times, and I had to replace 30- and even 20-foot casts with bow-and-arrow casts to tight holding spots, often with inhabitants more than willing to take my fly. In many instances this was close combat fishing, but the aftermath of watching a beautiful brook or brown trout come to hand was most rewarding.

When you start thinking about next season, I encourage all of you to start exploring; you won't be sorry. Get out your Wisconsin Gazetteer, familiarize yourself with online sites like Google Earth, look at the T.R.O.U.T. Viewer provided by the WDNR, and ponder maps of Wisconsin's classified trout streams. Another option, and a good one, is to call the Natural Resource Office in Baldwin, Wisconsin, and talk with Kasey Yallaly (715-977-734) or one of her staff. They will provide you with more than enough information to get you started. The point is to get out of your comfort-zone and stop fishing the same waters over and over. Once you do, the only thing you'll have to deal with is the question "Where am I going to fish today? Hmm, so many choices!"

In this issue, Greg Olsen starts us off with some thoughtful notes and why he is so thankful to be able to live in an area that offers great fishing and short drives to experience it. Randy Arnold gives an update on current and future habitat improvement projects slated for the up-coming year. It looks like a full plate so volunteers be ready. Paul Johnson recounts his season of fly fishing and tells us that even though his expected late fall hatches did not occur, there was still plenty of excellent fishing along the way, plus an added bonus of fishing with his daughter, memorable family outings, and the anticipation of next season. Skip James provides a fun and factual article on how the history of fly-tying exhibits repeating cycles of simplicity and complexity, and offers a personal story of how simplicity and complexity influenced a good friend's fishing day on a famous Scottish river. Our favorite coulee trout chaser, Bob Trevis, shows us how to tie the "Blowtorch." Even though it is classified as a "Euro attractor pattern," the fly still has merit and can easily be fished with conventional gear. Happy Holidays!

Habitat Improvement Update

RANDY ARNOLD

The first workday of the 2021–2022 brush and tree removal season got underway Saturday morning, October 30th. Our first project was the removal of buckthorn and box elder trees from just upstream of the parking lot on River Drive. Seven volunteers turned out to help with the project. Thanks to Jeff Himes, Pete Kilibarda, Bill Farquhar, Tom Anderson, John Skelton, and Ben Belt and his son Sawyer (crew pictured below). The morning's work involved cutting and stacking the buckthorn and box elder in piles near where it was cut.

Early in November, instructor Steve Papp and the other teachers from his grade at Greenwood Elementary School in River Falls will bring the entire class of students out to the site for a student service-learning project. Their job will be to drag the cut brush to a bonfire in the field nearby where it will be burned. A similar student service-learning project was held two years ago when we removed buckthorn from just downstream of the parking lot. The students were bused to the site and accompanied by parent chaperones. The event culminated with a little snack of cookies and hot chocolate for the kids before the bus ride back to school. Kasey Yallaly participated by taking groups of the students on a nature walk and talked about the importance of maintaining a healthy riparian corridor, and she has graciously volunteered to participate again in this year's event. Our plan to continue the work last year was interrupted by the Covid pandemic. I plan to hold one more workday at the site to make certain that there is enough material cut to keep the kids busy for the 3 hours they plan to spend there.

Nate Anderson, who leads the WDNr's stream restoration team, has chosen the new Halvorson easement on the lower Trimbelle to be next year's habitat project for our chapter area. This site has been heavily pastured by horses and there is very little in the way of brush and trees that need to be removed before this work begins. More typically, project volunteers would be involved with removing trees and brush from a site before work begins.

Rest assured, there is no lack of brush and tree removal work for us to do this season. We will be tackling maintenance projects on a number of easements which have become so overgrown that they are impossible to fish. I met with Kasey earlier this fall to visit some of these sites and to plan a course of action. Possible locations for work on the Kinni include sections both upstream and downstream of the Steeple Road bridge, a site immediately downstream of the red cabin site restoration, a section of the Kinni from the parking lot on Hwy 65 up to Liberty Road, and a continuation of work downstream of the handicap fishing pier on River Drive. In addition, there is brushing work which needs to occur on Parker Creek upstream of Pleasant Avenue and a section of Cady Creek near the uppermost DNR angler access parking lot. If, by chance, we are able to successfully tackle all of the above this season, there is a mile of easement upstream of the new Von Holtum easement on Plum Creek which could use some serious brush removal just to make it fishable.



Views from this Side of My Vise

PAUL JOHNSON

What a strange year it has been. In the late summer, when it was very warm and humid, I sat at my vise tying up some small BWO Special flies and dreaming about a cold and damp fall day that would get those little mayflies going so I could enjoy some dry fly fishing.

As things turned out, that never really happened. It wasn't until my last outing of the year that I actually put on my waders and stopped wet wading. Even with that, I have had a couple wonderful months of fishing. The hopper season was very good to me. I had numerous memorable eats on my Bob Hopper, Neversink Trude, and Pink Pookies.

What about those little mayflies I was dreaming about? Well, I even had a couple of really good days fishing those small dry flies. It is such a pleasure to cast those flies, not to mention that special feeling when the fish cooperate and come up to sip them in.

Earlier today, someone asked if I was ready for the cold weather that will come. My response was to shrug my shoulders and say "Not much I can do about it." As I have had a chance to reflect on this question, my answer now would be "Yes, I am ready." In the last couple of months I was able to take a trip to southeastern Minnesota with some really good friends and explore several new streams. I got to go fishing with my daughter. I took a short fishing (for me) and biking (for her) trip with my wife. On my last outing, I fished with some other friends and I even made a new friend that day.

So as the days get cooler and shorter, I still have my tying vise that will keep me dreaming of spring and those caddis dancing on the water. I can also reflect back on a summer's worth of experiences and work on figuring out how to top them next year.

Skip's Loose Threads

The history of fly-tying exhibits repeating cycles of complexity and simplicity. Take emergers, for instance. Most of us know of Sylvester Nemes and his books on tying and fishing simple soft-hackle patterns, but we forget that T.E. Pritt's book *Yorkshire Trout Flies* a hundred years before (1885) touted the same techniques, and Pritt's creations were banned in "gentlemanly" Northumbrian trout water because they were so effective. In fact, they became the staple weapon of poachers. But still, two of Pritt's creations, the Partridge and Green, and the Partridge and Orange, are still in wide use today. In between Pritt and Nemes, we have Jim Leisenring and "Pete" Hidy's "Flymphs" from the 1950s, as well as the "Wet-Dry" fly designed by Gary Borger. Those fishermen represent the simplicity approach.

But many tiers thought that truly effective emergers needed to be very specific, like G.E.M. Skues, in the first years of the 20th century, who was banished from fishing the river Test because his flies were designed to sink. Or Doug Swisher and Carl Richards, who, in the 1970s, advocated tying emergers with handicaps, like a tied-under wing, or a bent hook shank. More recently, there have been many books specifically about tying and fishing emergers, with elaborate tying instructions and complicated patterns.

Occasionally, the intersection of complexity and simplicity can be very funny. One of my closest fishing pals, a doctor with means

far in excess of my own, once secured a beat for a day on a famous Scottish salmon river. His assigned ghillie watched carefully while my friend strung up his rod, pulled some line from the guides, and tied a Rusty Rat to his tippet. Now the Rusty Rat, as most of you know, is a rather simple hair-wing salmon fly, one that the doc had used successfully many times on the Whale River in Ontario. Stepping into the water, his ghillie on his left side carrying his great net, doc began to cast, drifting his fly seductively through promising currents. This went on for half an hour, with nary a sign of a salmon. My friend retreated to the bank, intending to change his fly. The ghillie then said, in his most deprecating voice: "Is the gentleman ready now to begin fishing?" and grabbed the doc's tippet, to which he tied a fully dressed feather-wing Blue Charm, one of those beautiful creations tied by an Irish widow without a vise (and probably without a vice, either!) and that you might see in a cover photo from *Fly Tyer Magazine*. It's even hard to remember the correct names for all the myriad parts of the pattern. Beaten down, bowed with chagrin, the doc resumed casting, and either through demonic design or divine indifference, a salmon sucked in the fly on the first cast. The two men shared a wee dram when the fish was landed. Complexity won that day!



Soft hackle flies or spiders:
Sylvester Nemes, T.E. Pritt



Flymph or Wet-Dry Fly



Rusty Rat



Feather-wing Blue Charm

4 x 100 Chance Fundraiser

Kiap-TU-Wish will be holding another 4 x 100 chance fundraiser this year. The four items selected provide something for everyone. Last's years chance offering was a huge success and thanks to friends and members was a complete sell-out. This year's selections again offer some spectacular choices. The Fishpond Thunderhead Submersible Duffel offers water-tight welded fabric construction. It has a submersible main cargo zipper, an included shoulder strap, and is carry-on compatible. Joshua Cunningham's painting will certainly complement any room in your home. His artistic credentials are evidenced by his 2nd place award from Plein

Air Painting in the 15th International ARC Salon Competition, for his painting Abandoned to Sunset. Plein Air Painting is about painting on site and creating beautiful scenes fully from life in a natural setting. Scott describes their new Centric fly rod series as "Fresh, Fast, And Unfiltered." The Centric series will accomodate anglers of all skill levels and are light in hand, and extremely accurate. What can you say about the Norlings and their renowned Norling Rods that hasn't already been said? Form and function, taken to their highest level, and creating a magical wand that is truly the essence of fly-fishing. We are so lucky to have them both.



Fishpond Dry Bag

Fishpond's Thunderhead Submersible Duffel. Dimensions: 39 L (2,379 cubic inches), 2.6 lbs, 21" x 12" x 11." Donated by Mend Provisions. 100 chances at \$10 per chance. Retail value: \$299



Early Spring on Pine Creek

A framed painting by award winning artist Joshua Cunningham. The painting is 9" x 12," oil on mounted linen. Framed in antique black with gold liner. Framed dimensions: 16" x 19." Valued at \$1,000. 100 chances at \$10 per chance.



Scott Centric Rod

5-wt, 9'. Effortless control best describes the Centric 9054. This rod is a true trout rod and it excels at almost all techniques and set ups. It's also effortless to roll cast, single hand spey, and mend. 100 chances at \$10 per chance. Retail value: \$945



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. and Dave Norling Jr. 100 chances at \$20 per chance. Retail value: \$1,800

BLOWTORCH

Hook: #14 or #16 60-degree Jig hook (de-barbed)

Bead & wire: 2.8 or 3 mm slotted Copper Tungsten & .015 lead substitute

Thread: 14/0 Hot Orange

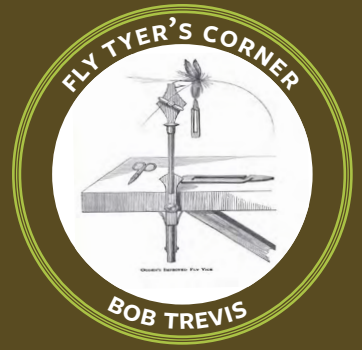
Tail: Glo-Brite #5 (or sub other bright orange floss)

First Rib: Opal or Pearl Mirage Flashabou (or sub Sulky HoloShimmer)

Second Rib: 5X tippet material

Body: 2-3 strands Peacock Herl (or sub Black Peacock Ice Dub)

Collar: Natural CDC feather (or sub a tan hen neck feather)



Devin Olsen is a Euro-nymphing specialist and author, but his Blowtorch works well on our Driftless waters with “conventional” nymphing gear and a small indicator.

It’s an attractor nymph with fore-and-aft hot spots, getting down deep courtesy of the tungsten bead and jig hook combination.

As a double bonus, the nymph rides hook-point up (avoiding many bottom snags) and usually hooks a trout in the roof of the mouth.

I like it fished at twice the water depth with a pegged Lindy float, and know I am getting down when I occasionally hook a caddis case!

- Mount the bead, vise the hook and add 3 or 4 turns of .015 lead substitute behind the bead, shoving the wire tight against/into the bead. Start the thread behind the lead wraps, take it to the bend and back up to the wire.
- Take 3 or 4 strands of floss (1 ½” long) and tie down on top of the hook behind the wire and wind over with thread to the bend. Trim the tail short — not quite a hook gape in length.
- On the near side of the hook tie in 4 inches of the Flashabou ribbing so the short end is at the wire, and on the far side tie in 4 inches of the tippet ribbing so the short end is at the wire. Wind over both ribbing bases to the wire.
- Snip 3 or 4 peacock herls to even the ends and tie in on top of the hook behind the wire, then tie them down to the bend. Twist the herls slightly together and then wind them forward towards the bead, pushing the tying thread forward as you do, and tie off behind the bead. Half-hitch for security.
- Counter-wrap the Flashabou forward to the bead and tie off. Wrap the tippet in the opposite direction and tie off at the bead. (This extra rib is to protect the Flashabou and herl from trout teeth.)
- Size a CDC or hen feather as if you were tying a soft-hackle, and you may need to strip off one side so it creates a sparse collar when tied in behind the bead. Finish the fly by creating a Hot Orange thread collar behind the bead — I like to do three whip finishes and top off the fly with a small dab of Sally Hanson nail polish on the thread (top only).
- Tie a half dozen and then “Go Fish!” when trout season re-opens.



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Trout in the Classroom Update

Our six TIC classes will be getting their eggs in early November this year, instead of the usual January delivery. A few of the teachers are opting to visit the St.Croix Falls Hatchery with their entire class. After a tour, they will be taking their eggs back on the bus! The other classes are opting to have the eggs sent to them via FedEx. The WI DNR is graciously providing the eggs for free. We are still hopeful that we can do Bugs in the Classroom this year and assist with the fry release, but will need to monitor the school's Covid restrictions as we get into the spring

Hap Lutter Appeal

It is not too late to contribute to this special fund raising appeal. Historically "Hap's" appeal has raised thousands of dollars that were and will be well-spent on the restoration of our cold-water streams. Currently for 2021, we have raised \$7,405. Thank you to all who have contributed thus far.

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