



Newsletter of the  
Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter  
Volume 15 • Issue 5  
**May 2022**



## **RIPRAP**

Restoration, Improvement &  
Preservation through Research  
& Projects.

Photo: KinniCC

**Conserve**

**Protect**

**Restore**

## **The Drift**

RipRap has undergone a lot of changes in the recent past. After we lost our free printing and with the rising cost of postage, we decided to end the paper copy and email it to all members. The work of editing and layout is a laborious process, so we moved to publishing bimonthly. With the longer lead times, RipRap could no longer be easily used to update members on chapter events. RipRap will now enter a new phase. It will consist of brief emailed updates of chapter events, reports, and stories, with links to the full-length offerings on our web page. I'm a bit sad to see the old RipRap go, but excited for this new format that will allow us to be unshackled from page restraints, allowing for more words, photos, and now videos!

Our May 4<sup>th</sup> chapter meeting was at Rush River Brewing and featured our chapter awards. In case you missed our meeting, I want to give you a recap.

Randy Arnold singled out seven work-day volunteers who tallied at least 10 outings; during this past winter, most of those were under adverse conditions — see Randy's article on page 3. Thanks so much to these seven and all the others who participated in our work days. We heard at the April chapter meeting how much the DNR appreciates your efforts, as does my backcast.

John Kaplan was awarded the Silver Trout award by the chapter. John and I joined the KIAP board at the same time nine years ago. My first memory of John was when we showed up at a stream monitoring workshop given by Kent Johnson. I got to know John as we carpooled to the Trimble and back to Glen Park for the training. John really took that training to heart and has been Kent's right hand man ever since, installing and maintaining loggers, downloading the data, and championing the use of the WiseH2O app that is now being adopted by all of TU. I also got to know John on those cold January mornings when we would leave at 5 am, often in a snow storm, on our "spawning run." Picking up eggs at the 7 Pines Hatchery in Frederic, delivering them to all the TIC classrooms, and giving a presentation at each one. I couldn't have done it without my "co-pilot."

Tom Schnadt has been a long-time board member and recent past president of KIAP. I got to know Tom as a board member when he was president. Tom gave you the freedom to find your passion in the chapter and then did everything he could to help you nurture that passion. He was so supportive of Trout in the Classroom and later Bugs in the Classroom when we first started up. He has been a huge advocate of youth education, starting up our inclusion in the Pheasants Forever Youth Day and Rocky Branch ECO Day. He seems to be just as involved in the chapter after "retirement" and I am afraid that I lean on him too much. When Covid struck, Tom was instrumental in allowing us to pivot to an on-line auction when we did not have the banquet as an option. He has headed up the 4x100 raffle and been crucial for our presence at the Fly Fishing Expo. He still volunteers for TIC, BIC, ECO Day, Randy's workdays, and whatever else we come up with. He is great at getting others to volunteer as well. After all, who can say "no" to Tom?

I want to point out, in case you did not see in the latest issue of WI Trout, that our ex-officio president/board member, Scott Wagner, was given the Leadership award by the Wisconsin State Council. This award was well deserved. As I try to fill his big shoes, one could not have a better mentor as president. He is always there for me and willing to pick me up every time I stumble. I couldn't do this job without him. Thanks, Scott!

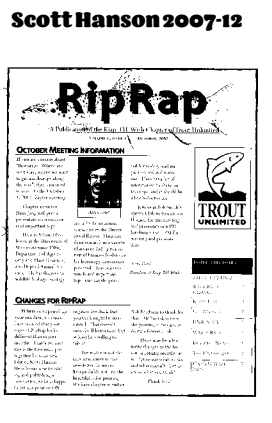
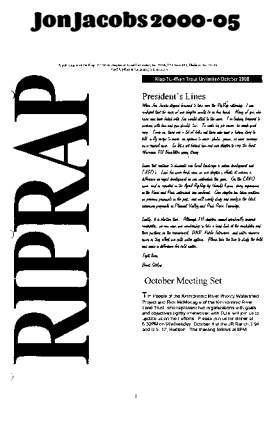
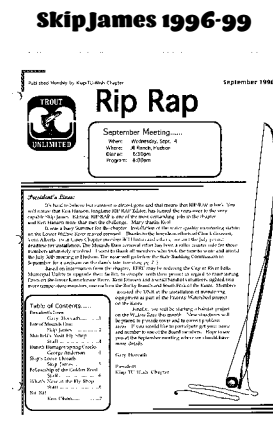
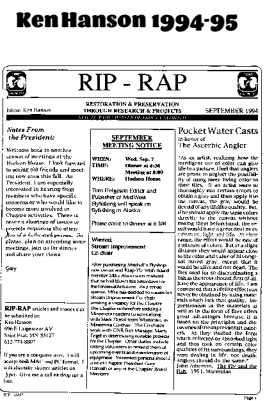
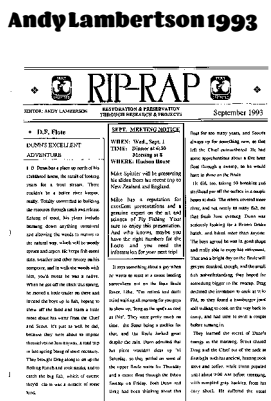
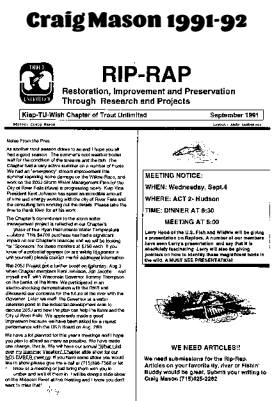
# From the Editor



Happy Spring. As Bob Dylan once wrote in one of his songs, "The Times They Are A Changin'." And so is *RIPRAP*. The Kiap-TU-Wish board has decided to change the way in which *RIPRAP* is presented and it will move to a format that will allow for a more web-based publication of news and stories. The plan is to keep a steady stream of information flowing to our website in order to bring more traffic to the site and ultimately give the chapter more exposure to our local and regional fly-fishing communities.

Some of you may not know that the first publication of *RIPRAP* occurred in 1987. From then on, *RIPRAP* has grown to its current state and to date has had 11 editors. I am honored to be a part of this group and would like to thank all former editors for their hard work and dedication to *RIPRAP* and the chapter. I encourage all of you to go to our website and take a trip down memory lane by searching through the *RIPRAP* archive. It is full of great articles and information. I'm sure you'll say to yourself, "oh yeah, I remember that."

## RIPRAP Through the Years



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Each of these images represents the first page of *RIPRAP* under each new editor. Early editions were limited by desk-top publishing technology, but that didn't prevent participation or lessen the quality of the articles presented. Thanks to you all. EC



# Clearing & Burning & Thanks

RANDY ARNOLD

Twenty-three workdays were held this past season. Volunteers worked at clearing two different sites on the upper Kinni — upstream of the DNR handicap fishing pier parking lot on River Drive and upstream and downstream of the DNR parking lot on Hwy 65 just downstream from Liberty Road.

At the River Drive site, we cleared box elder, honeysuckle, and some monster old-growth buckthorn, with trunks on some trees exceeding ten inches in diameter. One-quarter mile of stream bank was cleared on both sides over a span of 16 workdays, which included one mid-week workday with the third-grade class from Greenwood Elementary in River Falls, their instructors, and a dozen parent chaperones joining in to help drag and stack tree-cut limbs onto a huge bonfire. Former DNR wildlife biologist Marty Engel joined us for this event and took the students stream-side to teach them a little bit about entomology by showing them some of the aquatic bugs living in the stream.

The final seven workdays this season were spent clearing out a tangle of dead downed trees along with box elder, buckthorn, and a thicket of silver maple saplings which were growing far too close together.

Between the two sites, nearly 1,600 hours of volunteer time was recorded. Not counting the Greenwood event, 66 volunteers participated in the work, and 34 of those individuals attended workdays more than once. Eight volunteers are deserving of special recognition for attending multiple work days: John Skelton, 22 days; Jim Tatzel, 21; Dave Gregg, 16, Tom Anderson, 15; Trish Hannah, 11; Steve Cox, 10; Dave Kozlovsky, 10; and Paul Mahler, 6.

The DNR no longer has a budget for doing maintenance work on the multiple miles of easements existing on streams within our chapter area. I would like to say that we are making a dent, but the fact is that brush and buckthorn are growing faster than we are able to control it. I do wish that more members of the chapter would turn out for workdays to help out with this cause.

This season, I had as few as three volunteers turn out for one workday and as many as 18 on two occasions. In years past, I can recall workdays with over 30 volunteers. I hope that more of you will make it a point to turn out to help with maintenance work during the 2022–2023 winter season.

Nate and his crew will be restoring a section of the lower Trimble at the Halvorson easement this summer. You can probably expect to see an announcement for 2–3 seeding/mulching volunteer opportunities there. In addition, I will post for the usual volunteers to help Kasey and her crew with their stream shocking survey work on larger waters like the Rush, Kinni, Willow, EauGalle, and Trimble.

Pheasants Forever has signed on to assume maintenance on the South Fork of the Kinni. Grant funding enabled their volunteers to cut the massive stands of sand bar willows which had taken over many areas there. They also cut a lot of box elder trees and did herbicide treatment on all of the cut stumps to prevent further growth.

# Views From This Side of My Vise

PAUL JOHNSON

Have these words ever passed your lips? “But honey, I will save a lot of money if I start tying my own flies!” That is where some of us started out. Saving money by tying flies is possible in theory with some self discipline and constraint. Until it isn’t. When you finally admit that you have no impulse control when it comes to your tying addiction, you will need to give some serious thought to material storage.

Those that are just getting started tying their own flies can probably put all of their tools and materials in a shoe box. I can still vaguely recall those days. Now I need an entire room, plus a little more in my basement to keep everything that I have. But I don’t have a problem. Really I don’t. And if my wife asks about my tying material collection, I assure her that my collection is very normal while doing it with a straight face if possible.

I like to keep all of my tying materials neatly stored in my tying desk and a couple other cabinets. I keep materials that I use the most in my desk. Most of the materials are kept in their original packages so they are appropriately labeled and similar materials are grouped together in larger plastic bags. My tying thread and wire are kept in smaller drawers and sorted by brand and size. Likewise, hooks are sorted by style and size.

If you don’t have a dedicated space like I do for your fly tying, plastic totes work very well to keep your materials organized. Another option if you don’t tie a lot of different fly patterns is to organize your materials by what is needed to tie a particular pattern. You could keep a plastic tote that has just the materials needed to tie a Parachute Adams or an Elk Hair Caddis.

One thing you need to pay very close attention to is keeping bugs out of your tying materials. Materials that you purchase from your local fly shop are going to be clean and bug-free. If a friend gives you a beautiful full pheasant or wood duck skin that they harvested, be very careful! The best thing to do if you have great friends like that is put those donations right into your freezer. After a couple of days, take them out and let them thaw. Gently wash and dry them. When they are dry, put them in your microwave for about 10 seconds. After that, they should be safe to keep with your other tying materials.

Wherever your fly-tying journey takes you, try not to become like me!

# Blue Collar Cane: A Labor of Love & Rewards

GREG OLSON

**I t all started innocently enough. I was bored on a cold, winter's afternoon. I typed that four letter word into my computer. If idle hands are the devil's workshop, then Ebay would be the devil's thrift store.**

Searching “fly rod” and “ending soonest,” a bamboo fly rod was at the top of the list. Having been “bamboo curious” for a while, I took a peek. It was 7 feet so the swing weight wouldn't be too much of a shock to me. It had some issues. Thankfully the varnish was still excellent — stripping and refinishing varnish on an entire bamboo rod was not something I wanted to take on. The flamed blank was pretty with no delamination or glue lines.

The auction ended in little over a minute. The bid was only \$34. I don't know why (yes I do, the devil made me do it), but for kicks I put in a bid of \$35. Twenty-three people were watching and bids usually start streaming in during the last minute, so I knew I wasn't going to win. Sixty seconds to go..... 45.... 30.... Why isn't anyone bidding!? 15.... 10.... 5.... Yep, I now owned my first bamboo rod.

Well, I had already completed building fly rods on the two blanks I was saving for winter and we had a lot of winter to go, so I now had had another rod to work on. I'd always wanted to try bamboo, right? Ok, time to see what I had just “won.” It was a Wards Sport King M/29, with a single tip. A Google search showed that the M/29 was made by Horrocks-Ibbotson for Wards in the late 1940s. At that time Horrocks and Ibbotson (HI) was the biggest fishing tackle manufacturer in the world — fly rods, casting rods, reels, and lures.

HI had its beginnings in 1880, as the Geroge A. Clark & Company, in Utica, NY. In 1863, English immigrant, James Horrocks was hired as a clerk and in 1894, Edward Ibbotson was hired as an errand boy. They worked their way up the ranks and in 1909, the firm was incorporated with their names.

Perhaps it was fitting, given their start at the company, that James and Edward produced tackle for the “common man.” Their top-of-the-line fly rods, the President and Chancellor, sold for no more than \$20, while rods made one at time by the masters such as Payne, Leonard, and Young, sold for five times that amount.

The M/29 was the equivalent taper of a HI Tonka Prince, from a two-piece rod series consisting of the Tonka King, Queen, and Princess (love the HI names!). The Tonka Prince with two tips sold for \$11 in 1949. HI also made the rod with one tip; called the Pocono, it sold for \$6.

So, my newly purchased rod would be a contender for the bluest of the blue collar cane. Nonetheless, the Tonka royalty series consists of the best tapers that HI came up with. Today, a Tonka Prince in excellent shape goes for \$150–\$200, while Paynes, Leonards, and Youngs will go for thousands.

Lest you think I got a great deal, like I said, the rod had some issues. While removing the electrical tape covering the top third of the grip, I found that that a large divot had been formed by hooks being imbedded in the cork over the years, not to mention the cork crumbling all the way to the cane.

Although the rod was exactly 7 feet, the tip section was an inch shorter than the butt section and a casting rod tip-top was attached, leading me to believe the tip was perhaps broken at some point. The stripping guide was replaced with a very large spinning rod guide. Did someone convert this to a spinning rod or was the stripping guide lost and that is all the owner had on hand? The tip section also had the slightest of sets. Thankfully, the ferrule fit was good and the sections separated with a pleasing “pop.”

And so the restoration began. I replaced the the tip guide and the stripping guide with conventional fly rod guides. I removed the set in only a few minutes using a hair dryer to heat the section and gently bending opposite the set, holding as it cooled.

After a couple attempts, I found a matching purple silk thread (the color of royalty!) for the wraps. I ran a utility knife down the length of the grip, being careful not to go into the cane underneath. And by inserting a screw driver into the incision and twisting, the grip was removed chunk by chunk and my preferred grip, a mini full wells, was added. The new wraps and the old wraps were coated with spar varnish. I considered replacing the black plastic/aluminum hardware reel seat with a wooden/nickel hardware seat. I figured, though, that the original seat was doing its job, and it somehow felt wrong to change the pedigree of this rod too much.

Testing it out in the backyard, I found the rod liked a 4-5 wt. line. It cast a really sweet loop and was faster than most of my fiberglass rods. I was pleasantly surprised!

I held off fishing the rod until some warmer spring weather came around. I began my outing by sneaking up on a particular slow, clear pool which holds a lot of fish that are super paranoid. More often than not, a leader touching down on the surface causes all of them to suddenly vanish. If you manage to hook a fish in this pool, you'll only get that one; the others will be put down for the remainder of the day.

I worked out line, false casting perpendicular to the pool, and then turned to face the head of the pool, sending a cast 35 feet to the middle where the closest fish last rose. The tight loop cut through the strong breeze while my #20 BWO comparadun fell to the surface as soft as could be and a fish slowly rose to eat. I managed a short pause before setting the hook and was solid into the fish, my 6x tippet holding strong. The 14-inch fish leaped into the air and crashed back to water, the rod absorbing the shock. The fish headed for the right side of the pool toward a downed tree. The rod had enough power to guide it away, while registering every head shake. When I got the fish in hand, it was literally hooked by the skin of its lip. After releasing the fish, I looked down at the rod in disbelief. Did that just happen? First cast into a pool that usually leaves me disappointed, nice trout that was barely hooked, yet stayed buttoned after that fight?



Part of the reason that I wanted to try bamboo was anglers saying that rods made with it have “soul.” I think soul is hard enough to define in a human, let alone an inanimate object. The rod had its origins in a bamboo forest in China. Even though it came from a factory, most of the work was done by hand, probably many hands. Those hands brought home a meager paycheck to their families, while making fishing tackle for others like themselves — nothing fancy, but functional. A fly rod that was not going fall apart a year after someone placed six hard-earned dollars on the counter of a Wards department store. The rod

with its original soiled and gouged grip showed that it had been fished hard at some point during the past 70 years of its life. It felt real good working on this rod, and getting it back to its original condition. I have a real sense of accomplishment in bringing it back to life. I’m still amazed at how accurate the rod is and the sweet loops it can throw. Casting under the shrubbery is so easy with this rod; you look at where you want your fly to go, get the rod moving, and it does the rest. It certainly has history and a bit of mystery to its past. Does it have soul? I don’t know, but it does have some good mojo going for it!



Photos by Greg Olson





# Skip's Loose Threads

## Floppy Flies

Back when most fly fishers had never heard of nymphs, or Mr. Skues, before WWII, a forward-looking Orvis catalog listed what was described as “All Purpose Nymphs” in three basic colors and a variety of sizes. They were all based on the profile we now associate with a Gold Ribbed Hare’s Ear.

The sizes ranged from #10 to #16. They were tied with the same materials. But the way those materials worked in the water was very different. The larger flies moved a bit in the currents, simulating life. The smaller ones were much stiffer, and therefore more resistant to being animated by water. The “floppier” flies caught more fish.

Our fly tying materials vary a great deal in softness. We pick Marabou for its ability to wave around and give the impression of a leech. We use Grouse and Hen neck feathers for soft hackles. We try to find the stiffest, most web-free hackles for dry flies, and the softest deer or elk hair for Caddis imitations. We often forget that our beautifully tied flies are meant to appear alive, in and on the water.

I remember a young, talented fly tier who delighted in exacting imitations of insects that had bent legs, gossamer wings, properly uplifting tails, and even the correct number of abdominal segments. At the fly shop, we’d “ooh” and “aah.” As impressive as those flies were, they were designed for human wonderment, not the hungry eyes of trout. So what is a “Floppy Fly?” An insect imitation that appears alive when set in motion by river currents.

This means that as the size of an imitation decreases, the mobility and softness of the materials used increases.

Some years ago, I was tested by a dual-hatch situation that occurred on the Lamar River in Yellowstone Park. It was October, and the first snowflakes of the year fell gently on my nose and on the water. When the sun shone, tiny Baetis, #20, suddenly covered the riffle and trout fed avidly. When the sun was obscured by clouds, the small insects ceased hatching, and I was treated to large Gray Drakes, *Siphonurus* in size #8. In addition to having to modify my leader and tippet to fish the two different hatches, the day was alternating between clouds and sun about every twenty minutes. But the selective fish fed only on the predominant insect, ignoring the other species that had been hatching only minutes before.

My solution in both cases was a soft hackle in the right colors, fished in the film to those rising Cutthroats. Both were dark gray. Both were tied on dry fly hooks, and had a collar of soft hackle from a Sage Grouse — I used two large hackles on the bigger fly. The smaller fly was dubbed with wispy Muskrat underfur; the larger one, #10, had much stiffer dark Hare’s Ear. And the fish ate them both.

When we tie streamers and bucktails, it is important to use feathers in smaller sizes, and hair in larger ones, because the feathers are floppier, and work in the water to imitate a living minnow. When you tie underwater flies, the “floppy quotient” of your materials should increase as the size of the fly decreases.

## Keep a Back-up Nymph Rig Ready

GINK & GASOLINE: KENT KLEWEIN & LOUIS CAHILL

Changing out flies on the water takes time but is often necessary to catch trout consistently all day. Keeping a pre-rigged tandem nymph rig ready to go will allow you to quickly change out your flies from one hole to the next and save you critical time when your fishing time is limited. They’re great to have when you find your hot fly has turned cold, when you break your rig off on a snag, or find yourself with a nasty tangled mess. Let’s face it, we often find ourselves in question on the water, particularly in the first hour after we’ve wet our line. It can take some time to figure out what the trout want for the day, and by having a couple different pre-rigged tandem nymph rigs on hand, you’ll find it much more efficient to try multiple fly patterns and rigs out, and that should help you dial-in quicker and start catching trout.

Sometimes the tandem nymph rig you just caught trout with may fail to get the attention of the trout in the next hole you fish. This isn’t always the case, but sometimes for sure. In fact, this happened to me just the other day. My client had landed a fish out of the first three holes we fished in the morning with a woolly bugger lead fly and a micro-San Juan worm dropper. As my client worked the fourth hole of the day, the bites abruptly stopped, despite him making several great presentations and drifts.

Knowing there were fish in the hole, I snipped off the rig and tied on one of my different pre-rigged nymph rigs. First cast, my client landed a trout, and he went on to catch another fish after that. If I would have stuck with the first rig, thinking the flies were fine because they worked in the previous holes, we probably wouldn’t have landed those two fish. There is no doubt there are times when trout will key in on a specific aquatic insect and become selective feeders. Some days, however, when there isn’t a hatch or specific food source they are keying in on, I think trout often create their own specific food menu for the day. When this is the case, and you’re not having success, often all you need to do to get trout to bite is show them something different. Humans are no different. If we eat the same thing for lunch a couple days in a row, we’re ready for a change.

So, before my guide trips these days, I’ve gotten into the routine of tying up a few different tandem nymph rig combinations, and I stow them on a foam patch in my pack. I’ll have one big fly and bright attractor nymph rig, one heavy medium-sized lead fly nymph with a soft-hackle rig, and, last, a small tungsten nymph with a tiny baetis or midge dropper rig. Between these three rigs, I’ll usually find one that works for the water I’m fishing. Give this tip a try next time you’re out trout fishing.

# Tent Winged Caddis

Hook: 2x long fine wire dry fly hook, #16-18 for local waters, #12-14 Western waters

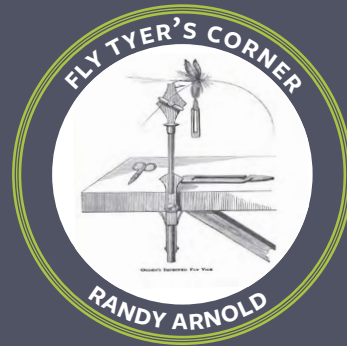
Thread: Olive

Body: Mixture of Antron and natural fibers in grey, tan, or olive. Chopped caribou added for #12-14

Wing: Canadian goose feather treated with Flexament on both sides

Hackle: Dun colored saddle hackle

Optional: White or orange color calf-tail post for added visibility



This is the most prominent fly in my arsenal. I only fish dry flies and on occasion may fish a streamer. In the absence of any hatch activity, this is my go-to fly.

I prefer to fish this fly up-stream and will cast to rises if they occur; otherwise I go prospecting and try to entice a hungry trout into taking what they think is a tasty morsel.

After hooking multiple fish, the tent shape wing becomes battered and frayed, making the fly ride even lower in the water and thus giving it the added bonus of appearing as an emerging caddis with no decline in the fly's effectiveness.

- Start by tying in the post if you elect to include it. This location is the index point.
- Dub the body starting at the bend of the hook up to the index point where the optional post would be located. For larger-sized Western flies spin a dubbing loop with some chopped caribou hair included for a more buggy look.
- Cut a section of the treated goose feather quill and “tent” it over the body. Secure the wing at the index point.
- Pinch the rear portion of the wing together and trim to a 45 degree angle, creating a v-shape when viewed from above.
- Tie in the hackle and make four turns, two in back and two in front of the post if included.
- Whip-finish the hackle and trim the underside, which will allow the fly to ride low in the water.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Fly-Fishing for Trout Clinic

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 virus, we've decided to take a chance and conduct another Fly Fishing for Trout clinic in River Falls. We will make every effort to ensure everyone's safety by providing masks and hand sanitizer, but it will be a challenge to conduct hands-on casting instruction. Even so, we need your help as volunteers to act as guides, mentors, and instructors.

This year's Fly Fishing Clinic, sponsored jointly by Kiap-TU-Wish and River Falls Parks and Recreation, is set for Saturday, June 4, from 1:00-9:00 in Glen Park. We've been conducting this clinic for years and we know that it's always popular; we expect about 20 students. The clinic will cover casting, knot tying, entomology, fishing strategies, and wading safety.

Kiap-TU-Wish will provide supper during a break at 5:00, and guided fishing in the evening. Our chapter members are invited to join us as instructors, mentors, guides, and supper servers.

Mark your calendars for June 4 and volunteer by contacting Mike Alwin at [mikealwin@gmail.com](mailto:mikealwin@gmail.com) or Brian Smolinski at [brian@lundsflyshop.com](mailto:brian@lundsflyshop.com). I guarantee you'll have fun.  
Mike Alwin

## Volunteer Hours: April 2021 to March 2022

Management	891	19%
Education	228	5%
Engagement	104	2%
Fundraising	422	9%
Conservation, Science & Monitoring	2,101	44%
Advocacy	564	12%
Communication	444	9%

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