

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited December 2001

## President's Lines

### Fund Raising:

General fund raising is not something our chapter has done very well in the past. We have never directly solicited our members for cash for general expenses; instead we have been able to rely on the revenue from our annual Holiday Banquet. However, our chapter is like any other organization feeling the pinch of rising costs. Mailing and printing costs for the RipRap have risen to the point of taking the majority of our yearly budget while there are plenty of good causes that we should support as well. Our major projects, such as the video and stream improvement projects have been self-funding through grants and the generous donations of some of our members, but there have been many projects that have "nickel and dimed" us. As a result, our treasury has slowly eroded over the years to the point of concern.

Many of you have said that you did not realize that the chapter receives NO funding from the national organization to offset operating expenses such as the newsletter, website, etc., so, you will need to excuse us if we hit you up a little harder for donations for these and other chapter operating expenses. Our chapter treasury is at an all time low and leaves us little room to finance an emergency project or the upfront cash for a major effort.

The Holiday Banquet IS our major fund-raiser of the year and I hope you can attend and support your chapter. We have a great location this year and some great silent auction item. Please give consideration to donating some flies, a rod you no longer use, a rod you made or a service from your business. You can, of course, donate good old U.S. cash!

Take some time to read our chapter history on the website and you'll see that we have done some great work, and managed our meager finances well and will continue to, too.

***See you at the Banquet!***

Andy Lamberson  
Chapter President

# RIPRAP

## Holiday Banquet Deadline Looms!

By Jon Jacobs

Plans for a dazzling holiday banquet are now firm. We have as our featured speaker Tom Anderson, a charter chapter member and fly tackle sales representative whose presentations are always both entertaining and informative. The banquet will be held at the Tartan Park Clubhouse, the 3M facility south of Lake Elmo, Minnesota at 11455 20th St. North, on **Thursday, December 6. Social hour begins at 6PM.** The meal will be served buffet style at 7PM and will feature sliced round of beef and boneless chicken breast as entrees, with au gratin potatoes, vegetables, dinner rolls and a beverage as accompaniments. Tartan Park does an absolutely first class job with both its facilities and in its kitchen.

This year's silent auction promises to be the best in years. Corporate and individual contributions have been rolling in (Scientific Anglers had donated a rod and reel kit and several fly lines; Kinni Creek Lodge and Outfitters has donated a one night stay at their facility and fly and book collections have been coming in from members, for example). Please consider donating flies, books, crafts, unique hand-made items or a tasty homemade preserve or dessert.

The cost is twenty-five dollars per person. Reservations may be made by calling Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop at 651-770-5854 or Jon Jacobs at 715-386-7822. **Reservations must be made by Tuesday, December 4, by no later than 4PM.** Please don't delay; this is one soiree you absolutely do not want to miss; if you can attend only one holiday affair this year, make it this one!

## Kiap-TU-Wish Projects for 2002-2003

By John Koch

These are the projects our chapter will be working on next year. Our chapter will be coordinating with the other groups involved depending on the project. I will be working on a schedule of actual dates and locations starting in January (though we already have a schedule of dates for brushing on the Kinni)

\* *Continuation of winter brushing on Kinnickinnic river. Location TBD. DATES: January 26, February 10, February 23, and March 3.*

\* *Continuation of Eau Galle River project. Starting June of 2002, project will be funded by Trout Stamp proceeds.*

Starting in the fall of 2002, a cost-sharing grant, provided by the Army Corps of Engineers, will provide a total of \$300,000.00 for the project. TU chapters and area sports clubs will provide a total of \$72,000.00 as part of the cost share. \$22,000.00 of this needs to be in the form of cash; the rest of the funding can be form in-kind services. Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter TU will be coordinating closely with the area sports clubs and the Trout Crew to provide assistance wherever we can.

\* *Cady Creek restoration project - Trout Crew has around 2,000 feet of work to do yet at current project site. Kiap-TU-Wish will coordinate and provide any assistance needed. Kiap-TU-Wish has also recommended landowner Steve Galoff, with the support of the WIDNR, for a Statewide TU Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding support of the project.*

*John Koch is a Kiap-TU-Wish Board Member and chair of the chapter's stream improvement committee.*

## Bank of Spring Valley Steps Up

By Jon Jacobs

The Bank of Spring Valley has made a \$500 donation to Kiap-TU-Wish with \$100 of that money earmarked for general chapter operations and \$400 dedicated to the Eau Galle River restoration project. It might be said that the bank is making an investment in the riverbank! If you're ever in Spring Valley—and you should be, both to fish and to help with the restoration project - be sure to mention your awareness of this most generous contribution to the local folk.

## The Rusty Crayfish

By Clarke Garry

I still recall my excitement as a young boy (and collector of all things wild) the fun of tying a piece of chicken liver onto the end of a string and fishing for "crawdads" in a local lake near my home in Missouri. Little did I know that 50 years later I would still be collecting crayfish (albeit very different species, in a different way, and for a different purpose). Over the past few years students and I have collected several dozen crayfish from the Kinnickinnic Watershed while working on class projects. And I've picked up additional specimens in the course of the 1999 pilot macroinvertebrate inventory and more recently in the first year of a comprehensive two-year survey.

Most of the crayfish that we've collected from the Kinnickinnic River mainstem and the South Fork appear to be the expected *Orconectes virilis*, the most common crayfish in the state of Wisconsin and the northernmost distributed crayfish in North America (Hobbs and Jass

1988). This species has been collected from several locations in the lower Kinni from the reach just above the confluence of the Rocky Branch tributary below River Falls to a site within Kinnickinnic River State Park.

So the story is more-or-less predictable to this point. Then, last summer, when I had the opportunity to have Dr. Ray Bouchard of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences look at a series of unidentified crayfish specimens from the Kinni, the last species I expected him to find was the rusty crayfish, *Orconectes rusticus*. Where finding a giant stonefly or the mayfly *Isonychia* in the Kinni (both less than common occurrences) would be considered promising events, finding the rusty crayfish is just the opposite. Gunderson (2001) refers to the species as a "nasty invader" and Hobbs and Jass (1988) summarize the rusty crayfish in Wisconsin as an "exotic, aggressive, tolerant species that has been extremely successful in the variety of habitats into which it has been introduced."

The rusty crayfish is native to the Ohio River Basin and the states of Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, and southern Illinois (Gunderson 2001). The range of *O. rusticus* in Wisconsin is disjunct, i.e., not connected to the region of native distribution (Hobbs and Jass 1988). These same authors indicate a modern range of *O. rusticus* across a large part of Wisconsin, except the Trempealeau-Black drainage basin, and they show no historical or literature-based data points for the Kinnickinnic Watershed. The prevailing hypotheses regarding movement of this species from native to non-native regions implicate human conveyance. These include bait transport by non-resident anglers, release of crayfish obtained from out-of-state biological supply houses for use in educational settings, and attempted development of populations of crayfish for commercial harvest (Gunderson 2001).

It has been appreciated for some time that the rusty crayfish has had detrimental effects on Wisconsin lakes, especially northern ones. Demonstrated impacts include: 1) displacement of native crayfish, 2) destruction of aquatic plant beds, and 3) heavy feeding by juveniles on benthic invertebrates (mayflies, stoneflies, midges, sideswimmers) (Gunderson 2001). In an intriguing study by Houghton and others (1998) the Prairie River in north-central Wisconsin was used to test the effect of the presence of *O. rusticus* on the density and diversity of aquatic invertebrates in a coldwater stream. The sections of the river chosen for analysis had three levels of rusty crayfish abundance: upper=not colonized, middle=intermediate colonization, and lower=high abundance. Interestingly, the upper section is classified as high-grade trout fishery (Class I). The lower section is considered a medium-grade trout fishery (Class II) as the river widens downstream, receives

less groundwater influence, and is subjected to increased solar radiation. Following analysis of crayfish and macroinvertebrate populations, as well as multiple environmental factors, it was concluded that "... the decrease in benthic invertebrate density was brought about by the increasing abundance of rusty crayfish." An additional conclusion from this study, and one of pertinence to the Kinni, was that colder water temperatures were keeping rusty crayfish from the upper reaches of the studied river. Previous studies referred to by Houghton and others (1998) "... found that post-molting mortality in rusty crayfish increased dramatically when the temperature was held below 20°C (68°F), and rusty crayfish did not grow at temperatures below 14°C (57.2°F)."

Johnson's (1995, Fig. 2) record of 1993 summer temperatures (7/18/93 - 8/25/93) for the Kinnickinnic River at Quarry Road indicates an average water temperature of 14.4°C (57.9°F) for this period. And it appears that on only two days during that time did maximum water temperature rise above 20°C (68°F). Additional temperature data (Johnson 1995, Fig. 7) shows Lower Glen Park temperatures running approximately 4°F above example sites at Quarry Road and Cedar Street. Summer data (1 June-31 August) presented for the Quarry Road location in Schreiber (1998) for 1993 through 1997 indicates means ranging from 14.70°C (58.5°F) (1993) to 15.83°C (60.5°F) (1995). Data for the comparable period at the Below Rocky Branch location indicates means ranging from 16.51°C (61.7°F) (1997) to 17.88°C (64.2°F) (1995). To date specimens of the rusty crayfish have been found in the Kinni only the area of River Falls, between the Lower Dam and the confluence of Rocky Branch. It appears at this point that this region may be the most hospitable part of the river for *O. rusticus*. On a larger scale, considering the entire watershed, for most of the calendar year and a significant part of summer the habitat should be thermally unfavorable for this species.

Rusty crayfish feed on a variety of aquatic plants, benthic invertebrates, detritus, fish eggs, and small fish (Gunderson 2001). Crayfish in general serve as food for trout and other gamefish. Borger (1980) discusses fish preferences regarding crayfish and appropriate fly patterns. Gunderson (2001) reports that rusty crayfish drive native crayfish out of daytime hiding places. Also, as natives swim away from fish attack, they become vulnerable to fish predation, while rusty crayfish aggressively posture, making them less susceptible.

The presence of this introduced crayfish in the Kinnickinnic Watershed is an unfortunate outcome of human intrusion. At present the species appears to be confined to the reaches just below River Falls. The two impoundments in

the City of River Falls have been shown to increase water temperatures for some distance downstream (Johnson 1995, Schreiber 1998) and this situation may be creating an environment, which is just suitable for survival of the rusty crayfish. An effort should be made to document and monitor the prevalence of this species in these areas and throughout the system. And here is but another reason to work to maintain and improve on temperature regimes of the Kinni.

#### References:

- Borger, G. A. 1980. *Naturals, A Guide to Food Organisms of the Trout*. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 223 pp.
- Gunderson, J. 2001. Rusty crayfish factsheet. Minnesota Sea Grant Program, University of Minnesota Duluth/University of Minnesota Extension Service, [www.seagrant.umn.edu/exotics/rusty.html](http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/exotics/rusty.html)
- Hobbs, H. H., III, and J. P. Jass. 1988. *The Crayfishes and Shrimp of Wisconsin (Cambaridae, Palaemonidae)*. Milwaukee Public Museum, 177 pp.
- Houghton, D. C., J. J. Dimick, and R. V. Frie. 1998. Probable displacement of riffle-dwelling invertebrates by the introduced rusty crayfish, *Orconectes rusticus* (Decapoda: Cambaridae), in a north-central Wisconsin stream. *Great Lakes Entomologist* 31:13-24.
- Johnson, K. 1995. Urban stormwater impacts on a coldwater resource. *Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, Vancouver, BC*, 10 pp. + figures and tables.
- Schreiber, K. 1998. *Kinnickinnic River Priority Watershed Surface Water Resource Appraisal Draft Report*. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, West Central Region, 26 pp.

*Dr. Clarke Garry is a professor of biology at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.*

## A Season in the Creel

*By Mike Edgerly*

Waiting for winter to arrive, I should sort through the gear, preparing the rods and reels and lines for the quiet months to come. But I can't. I'll leave the tangle of flies, busted leaders and tippet, tackle receipts and licenses in their boxes, packs and vest. Come January, I'll straighten out the mess, I promise. And when I do, the tackle will bring back a season's worth of memories.

The days on the home waters will run together and become one: the cold fingers and ice in the rod guides and the crunch of snow and the infrequent trout of the early season. The flooded streams of the spring will recede

within their banks and flow to the cold clear water and overcast skies and 20 fish afternoons when the trout rise to midges and blue winged olives. And there will be the warm summer nights fishing the sulfur hatch by moonlight amid trout rising simply everywhere.

I'll find in my tackle western flies, the pale morning duns and big nymphs and dry and wet stonefly patterns and my mind will wander to July, and the now annual, long hot drive to Yellowstone National Park.

There was the night the bison swam the river.

We are fishing the Yellowstone River near Mud Volcano, downstream from the area known to anglers as Buffalo Ford, but which is officially named Nez Perce ford. A friend has hiked upstream, while two of us search for feeding fish in the lowering light. We wade some big water and skirt a big rapid before we find rising trout. A group of trout, probably 6 or 10, is feeding on something invisible to us in the low light.

An evening thunderstorm moves along the southern section of the park towards the northeast. The approaching storm pushes toward us the fragrance of new rain. It mixes with the smell of sulphur from the fumaroles and geysers around us and refreshes us. We cast our flies upstream of the feeding fish and our lines shoot out vividly against the towering clouds. I go through about 20 fly changes and the trout refuse them all.

We hear huffing and blowing behind us in the twilight. Griz? Thigh deep midstream is not a good place to meet a bear. I check my belt for the bear spray and turn around. Not bears. Two bison, and they are swimming the river downstream of us from the west bank to the east.

We are motionless, the trout are rising everywhere and we watch the bison swim cross current above the big rapids. One bison goes under but bobs up, no worse for the wear as its partner reaches the far shore. On dry land they shake like dogs, if dogs were the size of VWs. The river glows in the orange and purple light.

Two bison calves emerge from the trees to greet the adults. The horizontal lightning upstream says the storm is almost upon us.

One more fly comes out of my box, a tiny, weird emerger with a wide collar of dark hackle. I tie it on in the dark and cast blindly to the feeding fish. A trout slashes in the vicinity of the fly and I lift the rod and it bends and the reel spins. The fight is not long. At my feet is a cutthroat of about 18 inches and several inches deep. I slacken the line and the fish twists once and is gone. We're out of our

waders and into the cooler for cold drinks as the rain and wind rock the truck.

Too soon the park is behind me and the summer is gone.

I am left with September days and nights. On the last Friday morning of the season I meet a painter with an easel set up on the side of a two lane road, putting oils to canvas to capture the Rush River valley in its golds and reds and faded greens. I fish the big river for large brown trout holding in deep runs and stalk small cold creeks for perhaps the loveliest fish of all, the brook trout.

These days will come back to me in a tangle of fishing tackle in mid-winter.

*Mike Edgerly of St. Paul is News Director at Minnesota Public Radio.*

## One

*By Jon Jacobs*

In December of Year One in the new millennium I'd like to tell you about some singular things from the season just ended:

**One River:** On Wednesday, July 18, my friend and co-worker John Hanson and I, acting on a hot tip from a third co-worker, rented a canoe at a little country tavern, paddled several miles of the North Fork of the Flambeau River and fished for smallmouth bass. What a magnificent place! There were riffles best measured in acres. There were boulders in the river the size of those giant round hay bales one sees in the countryside around Hudson. We saw an eagle perched in a deadfall overhanging the river and, seconds later, its nest, where a pair of juvenile birds cried plaintively for the adult. Deer came down to the water's edge and stared at us with big, unconcerned eyes. Sturgeon jumped clear of the water and crashed back down in spectacular fashion. It was a day for the ages, one I'll cherish when I'm sitting in a rocker on the porch at the home. And, I almost forgot: John caught twice as many fish as I did. He caught exactly two.

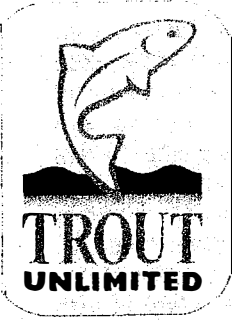
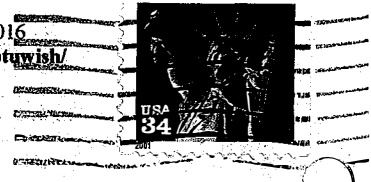
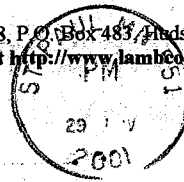
**One Bass:** On Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, in the midst of a brutally ugly hot spell, I deliberately went bass fishing in a trout stream. I thought that smallmouth bass were the target species, but when I threw my bug over by a big log that lay parallel to the current, a fifteen-inch largemouth came out from underneath it and quietly and calmly sipped in the bug. Just as calmly, it turned to return to its lair before it felt pressure from my rod. I couldn't believe how trout-like its behavior had been. I guess flowing water will improve the demeanor of any fish.

**One Rainbow:** I don't catch many rainbows and am always ambivalent about them. They're stocked and never truly wild and much of the time their hatchery origin is made altogether too obvious by their docile behavior and

pallid appearance. And yet: On September 26<sup>th</sup> I fished the Rush River. It was a sparkling fall day with clear, blue skies over clear, blue water. I was in the company of Craig Mason, a good friend with whom I fish far too seldom. Friend that he is, he directed me to a little current tongue where he'd had some success in years past. I took a cute little brown in short order and then had a strong take. The fish shot straight away from me, then made an acute right turn at full speed and peeled steadily away from me. After fumbling with loose line and dealing with other miscues, I landed a fifteen-inch rainbow. It had not a mark on it. There were no eroded fins. It gleamed like the chrome on a 57 Buick. Its crimson stripe and rose gill plates suggested a 1950's two-tone theme as well. Somewhere there's a picture of a pallid white guy holding a fish that looks exactly like its Pacific Coast ancestors. I just hope the angler looks half as authentic as the fish.

**One Brown Trout:** Actually, I can't say for certain that this was a brown, but its location and behavior strongly suggest it. On September 27<sup>th</sup> I fished a stretch of river best attacked with woolly buggers and heavy nymphs. But, at one corner, in a tiny back eddy, there was a fish rising regularly to something unseen. This fish had a perfect lie against the outside bank. The current above it concentrated and directed food to it, allowing it to eat leisurely in the slack water of the eddy. I put about a half dozen patterns over it and, while it continued to rise, it showed absolutely no interest in any of them. I was about to try a tiny pheasant tail nymph when I found a little floating soft hackle. By this time I'd thinned the tippet from the 3X I'd been using to sling woolly buggers down to a length of 6X more appropriate for fishing over a selective trout. After repeated refusals I had no expectations for the soft hackle, but on its first good drift over the fish, a big head poked out of the water and gobbled the fly. You can guess the rest. My reactions and hook-set were still set on 3X and the 6X parted before I even put a serious bend in the rod. Not catching that fish might have created a more permanent and vivid memory than catching it would have.

**One Brook Trout:** On September 30, the last day of the inland trout season, I fished what I've always thought of as a brown trout river. Very late in the afternoon I came upon a little flat and saw a fish rise quietly. I tossed a pheasant tail nymph up toward the rise and watched the leader shoot forward the instant the fly landed. Considering the vigor of the take, I thought I'd hooked a behemoth. In fact, it was about ten inches long, but if beauty could be measured in pounds the fish would have been a world record. It was a male brook trout decked out in its spawning livery. It had scarlet stripes on its belly, stripes on its fins that looked like they'd been painted on, glowing blue and red spots on its flanks and a coal-black mouth. It was a surprising gift from Ma Nature and a wonderful way to end a season.



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**MEETING AND PROGRAM SCHEDULE:**

**DECEMBER 6:** Holiday Banquet  
**JANUARY 2:** Clarke Garry on Kinnickinnic Entomology  
**FEBRUARY 6:** Bonefishing in Cozumel  
**MARCH 6:** Annual Business Meeting  
**APRIL 3:** Dick Frantes Memorial Fly Tying Extravaganza  
**MAY 1:** WiDNR on local conservation issues

**DEADLINE FOR JANUARY RIPRAP: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22.**