



A Publication of the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited

MARCH, 2011 VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

Restoration, Improvements and Preservation through Research and Projects

MARCH MEETING INFORMATION

Hey, it's time for the annual Kiap-TU-Wish Business Meeting! Head down to Bob Smith's Sports Club to find out what is going on with the chapter, and to let Board Members know how you feel. Wednesday, March 2nd, 2011, at 6PM (dinner) and 7PM (meeting). See you there!

Winner
Bollinger Award
Best Newsletter
2010



Kiap-TU-Wish meetings are held at Bob Smith's Sports Club, the first Wednesday night of the month. The March meeting is March 2nd. Dinner begins at 6 PM, Meeting to follow at 7 PM.

Photo of Split Rock Lighthouse by Greg Gerard

KIAP-TU-WISH
CHAPTER



March is our business meeting month and we have at least one board member opening. Please consider volunteering for the board as it is a great way to serve.

Parker Creek brush burning will commence Feb 19th. Lunch will be provided.

There is a TU workshop for training members in stream restoration down near La Crosse. The event occurs March 26th – 27th. Please contact me ASAP if you wish to go.

We will be sending out the Hap Lutter Spring Appeal in March. What better way to honor Hap and the chapter than with a contribution.

The Tom Helgeson Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo will be April 1st – 3rd. There is a new venue as the Expo has moved to the National Sports Center in Blaine. If you would like to volunteer to help run our booth, please contact a board member.

Welcome new members: John Larson., Glenwood City; Chad Svacina, Baldwin; Chris Lemmon, Hudson. Please join us at the monthly meetings (first Wednesday of month, Sept – May) in downtown Hudson at Bob Smith's Sports Club.

A NOTE ABOUT THE GREAT WATERS EXPO

We are thrilled to announce that Tom Helgeson's Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo will continue this year on April 1 - 3 at a wonderful new location -- The National Sports Center in Blaine, MN.

As you may have heard, Great Waters founder **Tom Helgeson** died in November after a brief battle with cancer. His absence left a huge hole in the Midwest fly fishing community. Thanks to the help and encouragement of his countless friends, we are continuing the expo in the Twin Cities. We have been overwhelmed and heartened by the enthusiasm and support to continue the expo and build on his legacy.

The managers of the National Sports Center have proven to be exceptional hosts and partners who will help the expo grow, thrive and ensure it remains the epicenter for fly fishing adventure, education and environmental stewardship in the Midwest.

We are busy booking exhibitors and planning the kind of educational, adventurous and interesting programming you have come to expect. We are close to finalizing arrangements to bring in several big-name fly fishing personalities who will add sizzle to the show. Stay tuned for regular e-mail updates and check greatwatersflyfishingexpo.com for more information.

From now on, a significant portion of the proceeds will go to a Tom Helgeson legacy foundation, a nonprofit organization committed to protecting and preserving the moving waters of the Midwest.

The Great Waters Expo has always been a celebration of fly fishing, its environs and the people who share in its majesty. The sport and its practitioners were Tom's passion, his love and his family.

We look forward to seeing you at Tom Helgeson's Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo on April 1-3 at the National Sports Center in Blaine.

A word about Midwest Fly Fishing magazine... When Tom got sick, he had to devote all his attention to the grueling treatment regimen. Tom's family is restarting the magazine and plans to continue it long into the future. We appreciate your patience and expect to have an issue out before the expo. If you have a story idea, or for more information, contact mwfly@mwfly.



SCOTT'S SCOOP

BY SCOTT HANSON, EDITOR

A lot of you probably don't think twice about golf, but I do, and the 2011 Minnesota Golf Show is this weekend. I will be working there, trying to drum up some interest in my magazine, North Country Golf. Golf Shows are a sure sign that spring is almost here, making me even more excited for the trout season, which will begin sooner than the golf season. Provided that our snowpack doesn't all melt in the next couple weeks, our local streams should be in fine shape for the Wisconsin early season opener, which I don't have to tell you, is March 5th. If you are busy tying flies to fill your boxes for the opener, make sure you check out Mike Alwin's killer new fly on page 4. I think it's one you'll want to have on hand. Don't stop at Mike's article, though. Read through the rest of this issue of RipRap, which is chock full of pertinent information. We'll see you at the Chapter's business meeting on March 2nd, and in the pages of next month's RipRap. Have a great month!



FLY SWAP

BY GREG MEYER

Fly Swap is in full swing!

We have had 8 participants in the February Fly Swap themed "Winter nymphs." Each swapper tied 13 flies of one pattern, then received 12 different ones in return. The extra fly from each swapper will be donated to the Kiap-TU-Wish banquet. Participants included:

Tom Henderson
Scott Thorpe
Jim Miller
Michael Miller
Todd Harper
Bob Torres
Bob Trevis
Greg Meyer

Look for photos, fly recipes, and perhaps a few stories about the flies that were tied and submitted on our FLY SWAP page on the web site. Check the Kiap-TU-Wish web site: www.kiaptuwish.com > Resources > Fly Swap, for swap rules and how you can sign up for future swaps. It's a great way to share flies with other chapter members, and to fill up your fly box.

Of course you can always email me with questions, river_keeper@sbcglobal.net.



**"DENNIS RODMAN" FLY
TIED & PHOTOGRAPHED BY GREG MEYER**



FLY TYING CORNER: THE SUBTLE HINT

BY MIKE ALWIN, OWNER OF BOB MITCHELL'S
FLY SHOP IN LAKE ELMO, MN

Every now and then we'll have one copy of some weird fly tying material that we can't get anyone to get enthusiastic about. That one little bag of stuff will flop around on the table for several weeks while everyone from the Lost Boys to our fly tying students will pick it up, turn it over, look at it and then throw it back on the table. It finally migrates to the cash register counter where we make one last attempt at showing it off, this time to paying customers. Finally, we either throw it away or one of my henchmen takes it home where it becomes lost on the tying bench.

And that's how it was with some 1/8", pink tungsten beads; absolutely no one was interested in them. Since I couldn't even give them away I finally took them home and tossed them on the bench, where they stayed for almost a year, hiding and gathering dust. But when the Chapter's annual Conservation Banquet rolled around in early December I thought of a way of using those beads. Did I mention that they were pink? I decided to tie some flies with them and donate them to the silent auction. I found a small fly box an angler could use for a winter nymph box and I tied up a dozen Pink Squirrels using the original recipe. Then I rummaged around for things I had in the collection to come up with a similar fly but with entirely different materials. It needed a name (don't they all?) so I called it the Subtle Hint...of pink, of course.

One of my friends bought the box and has been fishing most weekends with them. He reported that the Subtle Hint has out-fished the Pink Squirrel four or five to one. Not only that, I hustled to get him some more beads because he's tying up a bunch for a fly swap. Do the trout like this fly because it's pink or because it's tungsten and sinks fast? I hope it's the color, because they're not available in tungsten anymore.

The Subtle Hint

Hook: 1550 Daiichi (standard length, down eye, sproat bend)

Bead: 1/8" Pink

Tail: Flashabou Accent

Rib: Fluorescent red Danville +

Abdomen: Hare's mask with orange goat mixed in

Thorax: Tan UV Ice Dub



Photo by Scott Hanson

Save The Date!!!

This year's Rush Clean Up is April 23rd. Sarah Sanford will fill us in on more details as we get closer. You can let her know if you can make it, but be assured we will have lots of work to do due to the flooding last year.



STREAM RESTORATION TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Coming once again this spring is the popular Stream Restoration Project Training to help TU chapter volunteers and conservation organizations increase their capacity to implement restoration projects. This will be the fifth time that this very successful session has been offered as part of the Driftless Area Restoration Effort. The training will be March 26th and 27th, 2011 in Westby, Wisconsin, amidst some of the finest streams in the region. Please consider joining us. Contact your chapter president or Jeff Hastings to reserve your spot.

The goal of the training is to help conservation groups increase their project planning and implementation capability. The program will feature case studies from chapters, panel discussions from agency professionals, and a variety of topics to help you with your next restoration project. The training sessions will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday and conclude by noon on Sunday. There will be time on Saturday and Sunday for fishing the coulees.

Presentations and materials will cover the following topics:

- Panel discussion with groups already doing projects in the Driftless and how you can get involved with a project.
- Presentations from Fish Managers.
- How to write a successful grant.
- Prairie establishment and management.
- Developing a monitoring plan for your project.
- Working session on the upcoming Farm Bill.
- and much more.

Participants will:

- Receive a Project Planning Toolkit with useful reference materials for planning your next project.
- Have a chance to win great door prizes.
- Saturday night social and best fish story contest.
- Enjoy the early season spring creek fishing of the region.

Living Waters Bible Camp E8932 Reo Ave. Westby, WI 54667

If you are interested in attending, contact Tom Henderson at tomhenderson136@comcast.net.

DID YOU KNOW?

BY GREG MEYER

Our web site has interactive hatch charts, video and more.

Our website has the latest information on chapter news, a fly tiers corner, hatch charts, and fishing reports for your reference. The site changes often, so stop back from time to time.

Our fly tiers corner represents the best “secret” flies for our local waters (and favorite destinations) as tied by our chapter members and guests. Each month we add to this section and feature the “fly of the month”, with recipes and perhaps a few stories about the fly.

The hatch chart page is an interactive page that shows which bugs should be hatching for a given period in Western Wisconsin. Most insects listed have clickable links to photos and videos of insects, and links to the recommended patterns.



TERMINAL ROAD

BY JONATHAN JACOBS

I had been cleaned out. Nevertheless, with two good bass for the night, I felt resigned to my loss. No I didn't. - Thomas McGuane

Later I told Ed about the big bass that had gotten off. He said, "Well that's another one you can think about for the rest of your life." - John Gierach

The authors are writing about losing bass – a saltwater striper in McGuane's case and a largemouth black bass in Gierach's, but I think that feeling of near-despair one feels on losing a fish transcends species.

It's an odd quirk of human nature that our failures form memories every bit as vivid as our triumphs. I can remember clearly that once long ago on the Namekagon I was fishing a King's River Caddis attached to 5X tippet material. I hadn't much experience then and was casting a fixed distance by pinching my line between my index finger and the rod grip, which had been a harmless enough habit to that point. A very nice rainbow rose in a classic head and tail rise and gobbled my fly. I set the hook with my finger clenched to the line and grip. The fish determinedly bored away from me. The rod arced tighter and tighter until, with an audible "pop" from the tippet, it sprang straight again. Sometime in that same decade I was fishing the Willow River below its confluence with the Race. I was casting a black woolly bugger on the swing when a large (And I do mean large, perhaps the second or third largest I've ever hooked) brown trout slammed the fly. The fish rolled to the surface. I got a good look at its coppery sides and enormous black spots in an instant, but it was gone the next. About a decade later I was fishing Spring Creek in the Black Hills. I had been casting the same beadhead pheasant tail nymph for hours when the strike indicator shot forward. I was fishing a four weight rod and at that moment was wishing it were a six. This creature, a fish that made that brown on the Willow seem like bait, stayed deep. I played it for a long time and was making progress, I thought, when, suddenly, the fish was gone with my fly in its jaw. A year or two later, I had the incredible good fortune of hooking a big steelhead only a few minutes into my first trip ever fishing for them. Then, fortune turned against me when yet another tippet parted. Much more recently a big, blocky smallmouth bass made off with my Crawdaddy Bugger.

Have you ever lost "the big one" yourself? Of course you have. This is a depressing topic at any time of year, but a discussion of it now in the dead of winter, when it's difficult to make amends on the water, might be particularly cruel. By way of piling it on, let me harsh your mellow even further: Losing that fish was your fault. Perhaps you invented your own disaster, but you may have duplicated one of the many errors I've committed. Overtaxing my tippet material cost me that Namekagon rainbow. Using too light a tippet gave that Willow brown its freedom prematurely. I failed to perform basic inspection and maintenance on Spring Creek. The steelhead continued on its spawning run after the briefest of interruptions because a tippet material described by its maker as "super" and "strong" proved to be neither. When I checked my terminal tackle after the big smallie whipped me, I found the tell-tale curl of a bad tippet-to-fly knot.

If you're still with me, you are probably by now experiencing flashbacks to your own darkest angling moments. Introspection and reflection serve a purpose, but it doesn't pay to wallow in those processes, either, so let's resolve to learn from our mistakes. Here are my suggestions for happier angling:

Select tippet materials carefully. Find a brand name that works for you. Materials vary by manufacturer. Some hold a knot better than others, some are stiffer than others in a given diameter and some retain their strength better than others after use. Shock resistance varies, too.

Fish as heavy a tippet as is practical. Dividing fly size by three to yield "X" size of tippet is an old rule of thumb that works decently if the fly is a medium-sized dry fly, but falls apart if the fly is bulky like a Stimulator or grasshopper pattern. I've seen lots



of underwater photos of tippet materials floating on the water and even 7X looks like rope, convincing me that drag is probably a bigger factor in refusals than tippet visibility. It's important to fish stout tippets with sunken flies for more than one reason. If a fly is seriously weighted, it subjects the tippet to a lot of hinging stress just above the knot, causing it to work harden or fray. Too, if you're fishing underwater, you're likely abrading the leader against various obstructions and, if you hang the fly on something, it's nice to have at least a shot at pulling it free. I think it's imperative to remember that while you're having fun, your quarry senses that it's in a life or death struggle. Landing it as quickly as possible is the ethical course; sturdy tippets will help do that.

If you are more concerned about the pound test rating than the diameter of a material, you may want to consider using "old tech" materials, which are often thicker in any given breaking strength. That extra thickness might allow for both a better knot and increased abrasion resistance.

There are those who rap fluorocarbon for possible negative environmental effects, but there's no doubt that the stuff is tough and retains its breaking strength over time better than monofilament. It's also far less prone to hinging at the fly and can withstand a minor scrape.

Date your tippet spools when you purchase them. Monofilament more than a year old is suspect. Get rid of superannuated materials before they cost you the fish of a lifetime.

Select appropriate knots and tie them carefully. I favor the good old-fashioned improved clinch knot for average size dry flies and smallish nymphs (I've seen the suggestion that an ordinary clinch works better with fluorocarbon). However, when the hook eye is large enough, a Trilene knot, with its double line through the eye, is my choice. Another option is the non-slip mono knot, which is very strong and has the ancillary benefit of allowing the fly to swing freely. Lubricate knots before pulling them tight. Lip balm makes an excellent lubricant. Test your knots before putting them in service. Torture test them, in fact. It's easier to retie a knot than to shake the memory of a fish needlessly lost. Check your tippet frequently for evidence of abrasion or fraying.

You know, of course, that these suggestions won't fix everything. We haven't even touched on the tardy hook set, for example, but I don't wish to flood your mind with too many images of lost fish while winter winds howl and the boreal darkness surrounds us.





**TROUT
UNLIMITED**

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB:

WWW.KIAPTUWISH.ORG



DON'T MISS THE MARCH MEETING!!!

The March meeting is the annual Kiap-TU-Wish Business Meeting. Find out what's going on in the chapter.
Wednesday, March 2nd
Dinner at 6PM
Meeting at 7PM

The deadline to make submissions for the April issue is Wednesday, March 23rd.
Thank you!

