



Rip Rap

May Meeting

When: Wednesday, May 3
 Where: JR Ranch, Hudson
 Dinner: 6:30
 Program: 8:00 DNR Update

We are closing out this season's round of meetings with the traditional update from our local DNR personnel. In addition to Marty Engle's report on local trout survey data, John Sours (DNR Habitat Coordinator) will be joining us. For those of you who have met and worked with John, you know that his knowledge and expertise with cold water systems will certainly benefit western Wisconsin's resources. I'm looking forward to John's talk and data regarding the restoration of Cady Creek in Pierce County. I'm also hopeful that Marty shares a little more Pierce County data on the Plum Creek Watershed Survey. With these and other watersheds becoming popular fishing spots, we can all spread out from the Rush a little (see Pierce County Issues inside, p. 2) and enjoy our precious time on wonderful trout streams with a little more serenity.

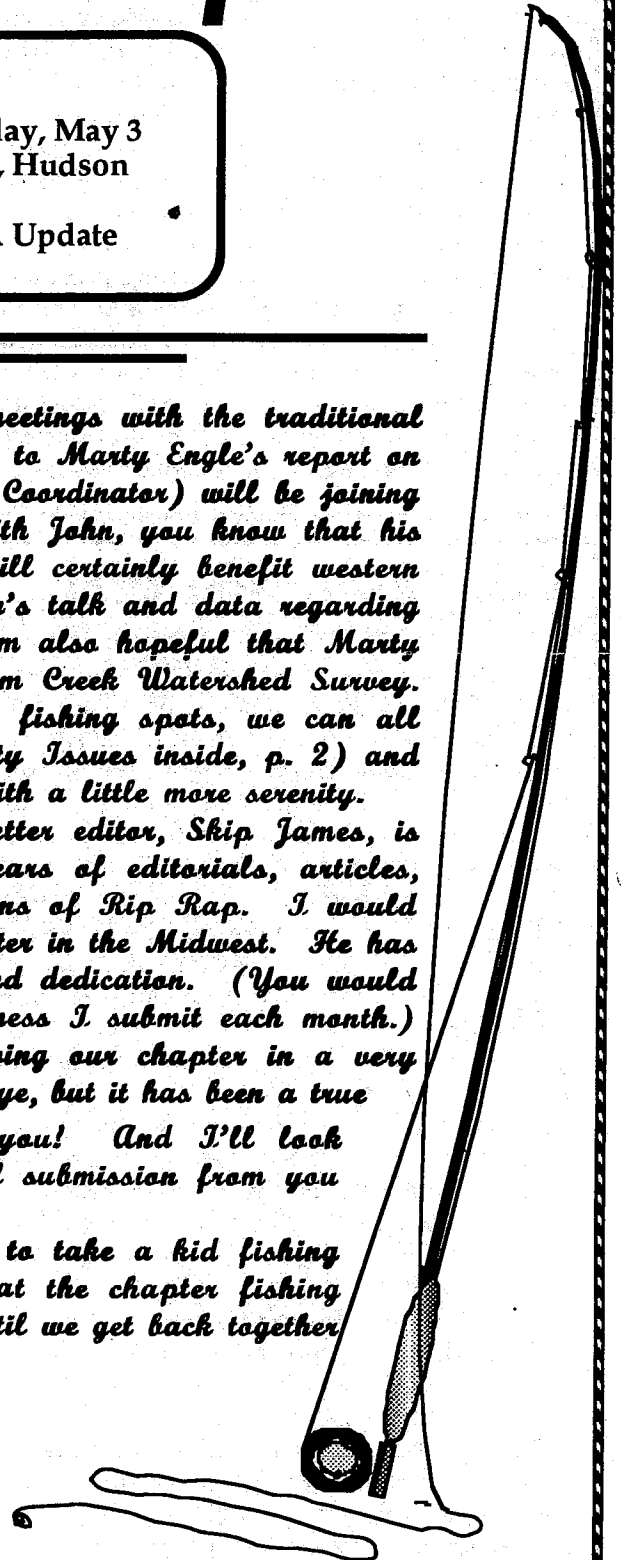
It has come to my attention that our newsletter editor, Skip James, is stepping down. Skip has given us four great years of editorials, articles, announcements, and plain hard work with 36 editions of Rip Rap. I would personally put our newsletter up against any newsletter in the Midwest. He has pulled it off with a high degree of skill, talent, and dedication. (You would agree with that statement if you saw the jumbled mess I submit each month.) Thank you, Skip, for your diligence and time serving our chapter in a very important capacity. We have not always seen eye to eye, but it has been a true pleasure working with you! And I'll look forward to an occasional submission from you in future editions.

Finally, remember to take a kid fishing this summer. See you at the chapter fishing clinic or on the stream until we get back together in September.

Sincerely,
 Brent Sittlow, President

Table of Contents

President's Lines	
Brent Sittlow.....	1
Chapter Bulletin Board	
Staff.....	2
Skip's Loose Threads.....	3
Short Casts	
Staff.....	4



Kiap-TU-Wish Bulletin Board...

Rush River Conference...

On Saturday, April 9th, John Koch and Brent Sittlow attended a meeting conducted by Mike Reiter of the Conservation Congress, and Marty Engle of the WIDNR, which dealt with the implications of increased fishing pressure on the Rush River. Trout density and size structure, angler success, habitat, early season, and law enforcement were discussed. It was an excellent opportunity to brain storm with fellow conservationists, representatives of Pierce County clubs and organizations, and professional fish managers. It's no secret that fishing pressure on the Rush is higher than it's ever been, and with no truly public access points, conflicts between landowners and fishermen occasionally boil over. Continuing conversations about these issues will, hopefully, lead to management tools that will protect and preserve this terrific trout stream for decades to come.

Eau Galle Dam Plan...

April 20, Kiap-TU-Wish members Gary Horvath, John Koch and Brent Sittlow attended an Army Corps of Engineers Public Hearing on flow modifications to the dam which is the source of the lower Eau Galle river. The Corps proposes an attempt at lowering the temperature of the water discharged from the dam to raise the viability of the river as a year-round trout resource. For many years, the river has been too warm to sustain trout populations through the hot months. Studies will be conducted to see whether the temperature differential influences the trout-carrying capacity of the stream.

Another issue discussed was the timing of periodic inspections of the dam. The inspection schedule involves turning off the water for a period of time so that the grates can be cleaned, with the slight de-watering of the river below as a direct result. Dam operators were urged to perform their inspections with as little disruption of downstream flow as possible.

We are hopeful that the Corps can accomplish these goals, and that the impact on the Eau Galle will be positive. Data on temperature and flow rate will be gathered during the summer, and we'll see if the cooler water and stable flow makes a difference in the trout population. Regardless of the outcome, it's refreshing to have the Corps, DNR, and the general public all working together to improve a trout stream.

Annual Fishing Clinic in Final Planning Stage...

Mike Alwin and Jon Jacobs are coordinating the efforts of the Education Committee in putting on the annual **Spring Fishing Clinic** which will take place on June 3rd in Glen Park, River Falls, from 1-9pm. Volunteers are still needed.

Students will have a chance to learn some important knots, see aquatic insects up close, have some casting instruction, and hear speakers on a variety of topics important to catching trout on a fly. They will also learn about cold water habitat, ecology, and Kiap-TU-Wish's efforts at preserving and protecting local trout streams.

In addition, each participant will receive flies and leaders, and a pamphlet on fly fishing. The goal of the Clinic is to engage folks in the mysteries of the **Kinnickinnic River**, and hopefully foster in them some concept of what a terrific resource it is. After an afternoon of instruction and practice, students and faculty will share a meal together, and then have an evening's fishing on the Kinni.

The brief of the **Education Committee** continues to be fulfilled by the Clinic, raising the consciousness of the community and involving the membership of the chapter. This is an extremely worthwhile effort of our chapter, and you can help in two distinct ways. First, you can volunteer to be a mentor/guide, helping with the instruction in an area in which you feel you have some expertise, and later guiding a student on the river itself. Second, if you are not free to be at the Clinic, you can donate a dozen of your favorite Kinni patterns to be used by students. Since the chapter picks up the tab for the whole day, including equipment and food, fly donations reduce our costs and, besides, students are always thrilled by receiving 'hand-tied' flies.

Past experience has taught that the Clinic is not only valuable to students, but to the involved membership as well. Everyone has a grand time, and the camaraderie brings the chapter closer together.

It's not too late to volunteer. Call Mike Alwin at the Flyshop at (651) 770-5854, or Jon Jacobs at his home in Hudson: (715) 386-7822.

Skip's Loose Threads:

Fun with Brachycentrus...

I've been fishing for trout in local waters for over thirty years, but there are still lots of places I haven't wet a line. The other day, one of those beautiful, sunny days that we were blessed with starting Easter weekend, I planned to fish the Rush at the Pig Farm. Java and I loaded the car for the day and took off, admiring new calves gamboling in the fields, the hint of green on the trees, the smell of freshly-turned earth. Full of anticipation, we wound down the final grade toward the bridge to be startled by the sight of nine vehicles already parked there. One was a new Jeep, with four fly fishers just stringing up their rods. They waved at me as I drove slowly past. Java gave me a look that said "I thought we were going fishing, but you're not stopping." Well, I continued south and found a place I've never fished before, south of highway 72. No other cars, no other people, just me and my dog. Perfect!

While I was lacing up my wading shoes, Caddis flies flitted around my face. They were the little dark ones, Brachycentrus species. I was really prepared for that hatch. I had just purchased a copy of Ross Mueller's excellent book on Fishing Midwestern Spring Creeks, and had spent several hours tying suitable imitations for Brachycentrus based upon his recipes: larva, deep pupa, emerging pupa, adult. I also had a few of my own, particularly my Featherwing Caddis in appropriate colors and sizes. I checked my watch. It was 11am and the insects were already hatching. I finished my preparations, dressed my line and bent on a new 30-inch 6X tippet.

The water at the end of the path was a long flat, about eighteen inches deep, the kind of water that I would normally avoid in favor of some other place with more current or more depth, but just as I was turning to go, a rise about thirty feet upstream caught my attention. I thought at first that it was a little trout, but when the bulge came the second time, and a dark head appeared, it was obvious that this fish was no youngster. I often feel inadequate in situations like that, with a big fish in shallow water, the middle of the day (it was 11:30), no cover. I've cast to such fish many times, and the usual end of the game is a wake from a vanishing trout as my line and leader reach the water. I watched for several more minutes before deciding to tie on a Caddis pupa imitation. There were no visible adults on the surface, and the bulging rise led me to think that the fish was taking emergers in the film. Java and I walked downstream fifty yards and crossed to the other side. The opposite bank had some trees that I thought might hide my silhouette. I worked up the bank until I had about a forty foot cast to the fish, from almost directly across stream. I was hoping that Java wouldn't forget her training to stay behind me and not jump into the water. I worked out line by casting parallel to the bank I was on, measuring the distance to the trout. I let my line and leader trail downstream in the current, to make sure my emerger would be thoroughly wet when I made the 'money' cast. Timing the rises, I cast about four feet above the fish, the fly landing to my side of the feeding lane by six inches or so. There was no sign of drag as the fly moved slowly downstream. Since I couldn't see the sunken fly, I watched my leader and the fish. I saw a little wiggle and the trout opened its mouth, closed it, and my leader began to bow upstream. I tightened to a very surprised brown, who took off upstream in a rush. That fish made a few more dashes before deciding to dog it out on the bottom. The pressure of the rod soon had a telling effect, and the fish came to hand. By the measuring marks on my rod butt, the fish was a bit over 17 inches. I eased out the barbless hook, and held it a moment in the water until it revived sufficiently to swim away.

That was the first of six nice trout that I hooked that afternoon, all on Brachycentrus emergers and adult patterns. I was surprised by how well the emerger pattern worked in slow water. It was much more effective than the adult. I found that I could pick off individual fish if I could see them. Occasionally, I would miss a strike because of the difficulty seeing the sunken fly or the motion of the fish. Toward the end of the afternoon, I started to use the emerger as a trailer fly, tied to the bend of the hook of a Henryville Special dry fly with about eighteen inches of 6X. The larger dry fly acted like a strike indicator, and one little trout decided to eat it, even though it was twice the size of the naturals. The adult pattern seemed to be most attractive when fished in riffle water, to trout that were slashing, exactly the place I would have expected the emerger pattern to be superior. A third pattern that I used with success was a simple soft-hackle, with a dark olive-brown dubbing and a couple of turns of gray-phase Grouse breast feather. That pattern was effective both in slow water and in faster reaches, but not quite as good as the Brachycentrus emerger which was a more exact imitation.

Brachycentrus Emerger (Skip's Version)

Hook: Tiemco 2457, #14

Thread: Olive 8/0

Dubbing: Davy Wotton SLF Green Caddis

Rib: Fine copper wire

Hackle: Gray Grouse breast feather tip

Head: Black Haretron





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Letter from the Editor..

When I took over the editorship of **Rip Rap** from **Ken Hanson** four years ago, I'd never done any desktop publishing, laid out a page, scanned a photo. To say that I was a little intimidated is a gross understatement! Over the years, and some encouraging help from Ken, I think I've solved most of the problems I had at the beginning, settled on a 'look' for the newsletter that pleased me, divided **Rip Rap** into consistent departments: Bulletin Board, Short Casts, President's Lines, Skip's Loose Threads. I know that it takes far less time to do an issue now than when I started. In a way, **Rip Rap** has assumed a personality that is consistent with my own.

The next editor will undoubtedly want to change things around, with a new look, fresh ideas, and perhaps a different focus. The tools needed to be successful are a creative mind, an ability to write clearly and with humor, a computer with software designed for desktop publishing, but most important of all...an understanding of the mission of **Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited** and a firm desire to promote that mission. I'll be glad to help whoever volunteers to take this job on in any way I can, sharing files, advice, and lessons learned the hard way. It's a great job, and I'm sorry to leave it. A vastly enlarged church music position at Bethel Lutheran in Hudson is the reason. I'm also saying goodbye to the KRLT Board of Directors. I hope to continue writing Skip's Loose Threads for **Rip Rap** for many years to come.

I want to thank the Board of Directors of the chapter for their support over the years, but mostly I want to thank you, the people who read **Rip Rap** and have been kind enough to call or write me and tell me how much you like it, and look forward to receiving it in the mail. I'll look for my copy next September along with the rest of you with particular curiosity and anticipation.

Tight lines,

Skip James