

Growing pains

A report by Kent Johnson

The following chapter members were present at an open house for the City of River Falls comprehensive plan on Tuesday evening, October 21: Ted Mackmiller, Brent Sittlow, Dave Ballman, Bill Lovegren, and myself. My apologies to anyone I missed, as quite a crowd was on hand, including both city and township residents. I also had to leave early (8:00) to pick up my spouse at the airport, so I did not stay until the conclusion of the meeting. Basically, River Falls is updating its comprehensive plan, as required by state law for all Wisconsin cities. Three growth scenarios were presented for public comment on Tuesday evening, accompanied by three different "urban area boundaries" (UAB) to accommodate that growth, which is expected to occur within the next 30-50 years. The growth scenarios were presented in graphic form (as maps), including projected land use. The open house portion of the meeting (6:00-7:00) allowed folks to view maps and ask questions and provide comments to city staff and the River Falls Plan Commission. At 7:00, Buddy Lucero, City Planning Director, made a formal presentation on the comprehensive planning process, including the three growth scenarios. Mr. Lucero also stated that the intent of the city is to finalize the new comprehensive plan within 12 months. He emphasized that the plan is still a work in progress and open for public input. Based upon public input, a final growth scenario will be fashioned. Possibilities for the final growth scenario include one of the three scenarios presented or some sort of hybrid, yet to be determined. After Mr. Lucero's presentation, the Plan Commission opened the floor for public comments, which were recorded.

*It is very important to convey to our board and membership the magnitude of growth for which River Falls is planning. The current population of River Falls is 13,000. **IN ADDITION TO THE CURRENT POPULATION OF 13,000**, the three growth scenarios would accommodate the following population **INCREASES**:*

Scenario 1: 15,000 (Total population = 28,000)

Scenario 2: 33,000 (Total population = 46,000)

Scenario 3: 40,000 (Total population = 53,000).

These three scenarios do not account for growth in the townships (Troy, Kinnickinnic, River Falls, and Clifton) surrounding the city, outside the projected UABs. The current population estimate for these townships (combined) is 9,000. I don't know what the 30-50 year growth projections might be for these townships, but I would bet they are sizable. The 9,000 current figure for these townships also does not include current populations

for Roberts and Hammond in the upper part of the Kinnickinnic Watershed.

If you'll allow me to step back a moment from my objective report of what transpired last Tuesday evening, all I can say is **HOLY COW MANURE!!!!!!!!!!!!** (or is that human manure?). [Editor's italics]

Now I'll editorialize and suggest a course of action over the next several months. For the past ten years, a small group of us has been trying to impress upon our board and membership the urgency of this growth situation in and about River Falls. While we knew growth was coming and have been working diligently with the city on storm water management issues, the city is now quantifying its vision for the future, and the proposed quantity is projected to be **LARGE**. Within the next several months, our board and membership have a significant opportunity to state our opinion regarding the city's comprehensive plan and growth direction. I suggest we start an earnest dialogue with our membership at the November chapter meeting (as planned) regarding what our message to the city might be, or if we will be offering a message at all. Creation of the message will involve a thorough review of the current comprehensive planning process, so that we can provide thoughtful, educated, and persuasive feedback. This may entail a small workgroup of some sort, or a series of board meetings that end with a written response. It may also entail some dialogue and meetings with River Falls staff. In short, this means work, and our board and membership need to step up and translate talk to action. Within the next several months, we'll either weigh in with the City of River Falls, or we won't be heard. The choice is that simple, but fashioning a message will take chapter time and effort. We need to leave the November chapter meeting having made a choice, either yes or no, and if yes, **who's going to do the work**. If we don't soon get organized and engaged in city and township planning processes throughout the Kinnickinnic Watershed, I'm not sure we'll be able to keep the "K" in Kiap-TU-Wish in the future. That would be a tragic shame, especially since the loss would occur on our watch.

Kent Johnson, of Hudson, is a water quality scientist and a member of the chapter's board of directors.

Bill Lovegren, of St. Paul, MN, another K-TU board member, filed the following report on the same event:

I arrived at the meeting at 6:20 and joined in with others already there, and still arriving, to look at the various maps posted on the walls by the Plan Commission. What was handed out was minimal, but the maps showed existing boundaries for the town, sewer lines, existing land uses, existing zoning, as well as township boundaries. The three key maps were proposed plans for growth for the city of RF, and the surrounding towns, over the next 5-25 years. Each of these three included different growth areas to

which the city could expand, including the sewer boundary, which circles the city at some consistent distance out from the city center. The three were not perfect circles drawn around the city, but irregular, depending on what type of land use occurred there, as well as slope of the land. Of the three growth plans, one was minimal, one was more moderate, and the last was more expansive, although the moderate and expansive were the two most similar.

Buddy Lucero, the city planner, gave an overview of the process that has led to these three proposals. He started at about 7:05 and finished at about 7:40. Questions were then taken from the floor, and until I left at just after 8, as many who spoke were from local town boards, or the city council, as were not. Both the chair of the Plan Commission and Mr. Lucero urged people to remember this was an ongoing process, and that much had yet to be considered. The comments were civil, although some more directly showed frustration with any growth at all. These were mildly stated.

No one talked about the Kinni, or water use/draw from the aquifer, nor about runoff, nor on any topic that would directly concern us, while I was there. I think this conversation is just getting started, and we ought to attend more of them.

November meeting to focus on development issues.

By Jonathan Jacobs

The chapter's open discussion of development, and the chapter's organizational outlook and approach to same, will be the topic of the November membership meeting. There's a great deal to discuss and there's an infinite amount of work to be done. Come and participate in both. The meeting will be held at Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street in Hudson, on Wednesday, November 5 at 7 PM. Dinner, as always, will be available in our meeting room from 6 PM.

Sporting artist Bob White headlines Kiap-TU-Wish Holiday Banquet

By Jonathan Jacobs

In an exciting development, artist and guide Bob White has agreed to be this year's speaker at the Holiday Banquet. Mr. White, a long-time friend of the chapter, will present a slide show about a nearly incredible angling trip that began with fishing for bonefish in the Seychelles, included a stopover in Australia to fish for barramundi and

ended with trout angling in New Zealand! For more information about Mr. White and his art, visit www.whitefishstudio.com on the internet.

The banquet is scheduled for Thursday, December 4 at the same venue as last year, the Tartan Park Clubhouse south of Lake Elmo at 11455 20th Street North. Social hour begins at 6 PM and the banquet begins at 7 PM. The buffet-style dinner will feature entrees of sliced round of beef and boneless chicken breast, along with au grain potatoes, vegetables, dinner rolls and a beverage. The cost remains as it was last year at \$25 per person. You may make reservations by calling Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop at 651-770-5854 or Jonathan Jacobs at 715-386-7822. The deadline for making reservations is Saturday, November 29.

The banquet will also feature the traditional silent auction. Typical auction items include angling equipment, of course, but artwork, culinary delicacies, gift certificates and craft items are welcome contributions, too. This auction is the chapter's sole fund raising mechanism, so please consider donating to it. Please drop your contributions at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop or contact Jonathan Jacobs to drop them at his home.

KRLT celebrates tenth anniversary

By Jonathan Jacobs with source material from KRLT

The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust celebrated the tenth anniversary of its founding this year. The Trust is probably best known among trout conservationists and anglers for its quickly and deftly organized purchase of the "Swinging Gate" property (The land was subsequently re-sold to the State of Wisconsin, guaranteeing public access to it in perpetuity) along the upper Kinnickinnic River a few years ago. The Trust also owns Kelly Springs, a high quality tributary of the Kinnickinnic. In addition, the Trust has permanently protected more than 1,400 acres of land in the Kinnickinnic watershed through conservation easements, land purchases and land donations. The value of the protected land exceeds four million dollars.

KLRT's 70 acre Kelly Creek Preserve encompasses both the headwater spring and a native prairie restoration project. School groups are using the preserve for environmental education and service projects.

The Trust has secured easements granting day-time use of over five miles of the river's banks to the public, much of it in the scenic and remote lower river's canyon.

The Trust is also expending tremendous effort on development issues and on the issues surrounding the proposed Roberts-Hammond sewage treatment plant in the headwaters of the river.

Yearly memberships in the KRLT are available for as little as thirty five dollars. For more information about the Trust, call 715-425-5738, e-mail the organization at kinnirilt@ameritech.net or visit its web site at www.kinniriver.org.

KRLT plans Kelly Creek work day

By Eric Forward

The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust is having a workday at the Kelly Creek Preserve to move the walking bridge approximately 200 feet upstream of its current location. The walking trail has been rerouted and therefore the bridge needs to be relocated to the new stream crossing. We will also be cutting box elder trees, applying herbicide to the cut stumps, hauling and stacking brush, etc. We would greatly appreciate any help that you can provide. The workday provides us with an opportunity to visit Kelly Creek and continue our important restoration work at this unique site.

When: Saturday, November 1, 2003 - From 9 a.m. to around 1 p.m.

Where: Kelly Creek Preserve - we will meet at the Kelly Creek Preserve parking lot.

We will be working for about four hours. If you plan on helping you should wear appropriate clothing. A few people will likely need hipboots to work in the stream. The majority of the area is wet so waterproof boots may be needed. KRLT has a limited supply of work gloves available. Please bring chainsaws, brush cutters, bow saws, and loppers for the tree cutting work.

For those of you bringing and using a chainsaw or other power equipment you must wear safety chaps, gloves, heavy boots, and head/ear/face protection. If you do not have this safety equipment you will not be able to operate chainsaws or other power equipment - sorry. We want all our volunteers to practice all safety procedures pertaining to their equipment. The KRLT will be providing refreshments. If you are able to help please email or call the KRLT office at 715-425-5738.

Eric Forward of River Falls is a K-TU member and a staff person at KRLT.

Wisconsin State Assembly bill AB —506 proposes “water grab”

Editorial by Jonathan Jacobs

Representative Scott Gunderson (R-Union Grove) has introduced a bill in the Wisconsin State Assembly that would change the state's definition of navigable waters to those waterways capable of transporting a watercraft for six months of the year. Currently, the standard is one day per year, a precedent of long standing, arrived at by a series of Supreme Court decisions.

Public trusteeship of and access to the state's waterways arises from the “Public Trust Doctrine” incorporated into the state's 1848 constitution, which made such a provision in accordance with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

Supposedly, this bill is meant to address the concerns of landowners who are somehow constrained from making alterations to properties through which dry creek beds run without DNR approval beforehand. More likely, the bill would remove from public protection as much as one third to one half the waterways in the state, waterways tributary to high quality waters of all sorts. A related loss to the public would be access to those waters. One wonders why Mr. Gunderson feels the need to disturb a couple of centuries of case law. *The Green Bay Press-Gazette* quoted Mr. Gunderson as saying, “It's one of the number one issues we hear about, especially when people are trying to do things on their property.” One wonders what the second most common issue the Assemblyman hears about is. One further wonders, incredulously, why Senator Sheila Harsdorf of Pierce County has signed on as a co-sponsor of this legislation, which, in the opinion of many in the legal community, is unconstitutional as well as unwise. One also wonders if the legislative assault on the public's interest in matters related to environmental issues will ever end. From the politicization of the DNR Commissioner's office to the elimination of the Public Intervenor's office to the kind of legislative claptrap under discussion here, there seems to be no limit to the assault on the public's standing in natural resource matters.

TU column provides insight on navigability issue

From the October 15, 2003 issue of *WSN News*.

In a column in the October, 2003, *Wisconsin Trout*, attorney and Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited Chair Jon Christiansen offers some insight into the

legislature's attempt to redefine the term navigability. Christiansen writes, “In government — as in affairs between neighbors — occasionally somebody pokes their nose into somebody else's business. That is what's happening right now concerning the public's right to navigate the waters of our state. The Supreme Court cases taken in conjunction with the DNR's implementation provide for a completely workable system. Completely, that is, unless the legislative purpose is to exclude certain streams for navigability in order to engage in additional property development. By draining swamps and channelizing small streams that occasionally act as staging area for fish fry and home for other aquatic life, more land go into development. “The Constitution establishes the Public Trust Doctrine and the concept of navigability. It is the job of the Supreme Court to define navigability and it has addressed this task admirably in the case law. While the Legislature is free to enact laws implementing constitutional intent, it may not be free to change a Supreme Court's decision. Whether or not this is so would have to await a court challenge to the proposed statute. Representative Gunderson's bill defines a stream to be navigable if it can float a watercraft carrying a person at least six months during a calendar year. In reality, this definition is no more precise than the existing definition of the Supreme Court's cases. So, is this bill a solution in search of a problem?”

SOURCE: Jon Christiansen column, *Wisconsin Trout*, www.WisconsinTU.org.

Quarry accident affects Cady Creek

By Jonathan Jacobs

An apparent miscalculation by drillers and/or an explosives crew at a limestone quarry nearly vertically above Cady Creek on 850th Avenue east of Spring Valley, WI resulted in a massive landslide that reached the creek's bed this fall. Fortunately, the debris that reached the creek was so coarse that the creek, while picking up an heavy sediment load, was not impounded nor de-watered. According to WIDNR sources, the quarry operators self-reported the incident and have been extraordinarily cooperative in cleanup and restoration efforts, providing equipment, manpower and subcontractors to perform the work. While damage to high quality brook trout streams is not a thing to be taken lightly, this is a case where all concerned can be thankful that there was no loss of life or serious injuries sustained.

Poultrygeist

A lurid Halloween tale by John Koch

My sister and her family used to raise chickens. Along with all the layers, they had a rooster. He was as mean and foul tempered a bird as there ever was; he hated everything: people, other chickens, even my sister's horses. In addition to this general air of unpleasantness about him, he had a set of spurs that were the shape and sharpness of a pair of Arabian scimitars. But this rooster was also a beautiful bird, with a wonderful neck full of long, tiny feathers that were the color of a fine Wisconsin micro-brew, perfect for tying trout flies. I struck a deal with my sister: when the old bird eventually croaked, I was welcome to the cadaver. The hide would be cleaned and preserved for the tying bench; the wiry carcass would be relinquished to the stew pot for soup.

A couple of years passed, and then I got "the call" from my sister: it was time. I rushed out to the farm, and, with my brother-in-law, walked out to the barn to find the bird. We didn't have to look far, however, as we spotted the now elderly rooster as soon as we walked into the barn; he was an old chicken, yes, but by no means was he a less active rooster.

"He's starting to go after the kids," my brother-in-law explained as the growling bird stared at us from his perch on top of some hay bales. As he raised up to challenge the intruders, I could see that his spurs had grown a bit: the gleaming bone-colored sickle blades were now about 3" long. "The dogs are getting to be afraid of him, too," my brother-in-law continued. "Do you want some help catching him?" He didn't wait for an answer, and instead grabbed the chicken by the neck and gave it a quick snap. A few seconds of flapping its wings, and the rooster was still. I thanked my brother-in-law, and took the dead bird home.

I could only have wished it would have been that easy.

It was supper-time when I arrived home, and since I do all the cooking for my family, I took the lifeless rooster down into the basement and laid it on a work table to be dealt with after we had eaten; my plan was to skin the animal, and preserve the whole hide for fly tying, its feathers intact.

I forget now what we had to eat that night, but I remember the sour taste I suddenly had in the back of my throat when, after a leisurely meal with my family, I went down into the basement, fillet knife in hand, to start the job of skinning the dead chicken. The rooster, who I thought was as dead as the proverbial door knob, was laying in the same position as I had left him, although now his eyes were open and his legs were slowly pumping the air, claws

extending and contracting in an eerie upside-down dance of the macabre. Panicked, I yelled something about locking the door behind me up to my wife, and commenced a desperate search of the basement for some sort of weapon. By the time I found something more suitable than the flimsy fillet knife I had started with (a small, dull hatchet), the chicken had righted itself to a sitting position. As it turned it's now very stiff neck and saw me, it let out a low, evil growl.

I sprang at the chicken just as it got to its feet. I managed to hit the bird over the head with my first swing, but was unable to get a clear whack at its neck due to the flailing spurs. After several attempts (excited swings with the axe that connected, but did little to slow the bird down) I managed to pin the rooster to the floor with my foot, and, with a solid floor finally behind my swings, managed to sever the rooster's head from its host. But the old bird wasn't done yet: I had forgotten about what a chicken's natural reaction to decapitation is. The headless rooster jumped up and commenced a frenzied race to all corners of the basement, reeling and flopping across the floor, bouncing off the walls, scattering tools and paint cans out of its way, finally coming to a bleeding rest under the furnace.

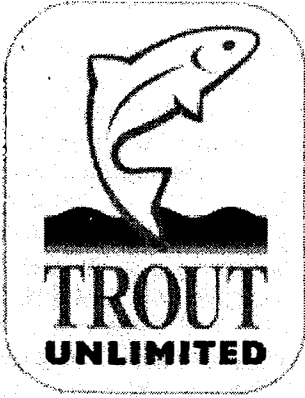
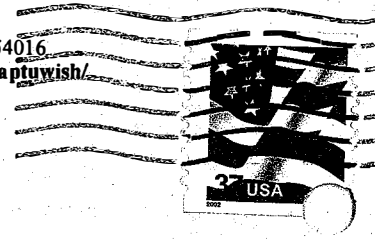
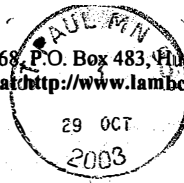
"Everything OK down there?" came a hopeful inquiry from upstairs.

"Umm, sure" was my reply.

The basement looked like a murder scene from a "B" horror film. Chicken blood, feathers and feces had been sprayed and smeared everywhere: on the walls, floor and ceiling, along with my workbench and all the assorted tools and containers laying on it. After retrieving the now REALLY dead chicken from its final resting place, I was able to salvage only a few nice feathers from what had resulted from our fight, the rest of the beautiful plumage had been hacked, crumbled, tattered and otherwise besmirched. After cleaning up the spattered mess in the basement, I really didn't have it in me to try and clean the carcass for soup; it got buried, under the light of a full moon, with a wooden stake through its heart, lest it ever decide to rise again.

(Note: the author has not learned anything from this lesson, and indeed has moved to his own farm, where he is in the process of raising his own trout fly birds.)

John Koch, of Spring Valley, WI is a modern day Renaissance man who writes, paints, and fishes, all with equal alacrity. He is a frequent contributor to RipRap.



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MEETING SCHEDULE:

NOVEMBER 5: DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
DECEMBER 4: (NOTE THURSDAY DATE) HOLIDAY BANQUET FEATURING NOTED SPORTING ARTIST BOB WHITE.
JANUARY 7:
FEBRUARY 4:
MARCH 3: BUSINESS MEETING
APRIL 7: DRY FLY DICK FRANTES FLY TIERS
MAY 5: WISCONSIN DNR

DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER RIPRAP: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21.