



RIP-RAP

Restoration, Improvement and Preservation
Through Research and Projects



Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited

October 1989

A LESSON ON THE KINNI

The bridge wasn't anything to look at, nothing more than a culvert, really. Though it was on a county road its function was to provide a means for farmers in the valley to move their machinery from one bank to the other. Built of poured concrete, it was hauled to the site and anchored in the stream bed. A model of efficiency, it had no guard rails and only two concrete pylons to support it. Rising flood waters simply swept over it and the small amount of debris that accumulated on it was easily dislodged when the river receded.

The rushing water had scoured a deep pool below the bridge and deposited a huge gravel bar in the center of the old stream course, causing the little stream to take a hard right below the bridge before turning downstream and carving a new channel on the edge of the gravel. The fitful stops and starts of the stream as it searched for a new course created a series of pools which were perfect hiding places for trout. Deep enough for cover, the lurking trout had little trouble rising to intercept the insects which the current delivered.

The pools were also perfect places for eight-year-old boys to throw rocks. While I had moved to the downstream side of the gravel bar to fruitlessly cast for trout, Matthew had firmly planted himself at the head of the bar and was busily pitching the largest rocks he could lift into the pool below the bridge. There was no one else on the stream except for his mother, and she was quietly disappearing into her book.

Thirty yards and a half dozen pools separated Matthew and me when another angler appeared on the bridge. He quickly assayed the situation, then climbed down off the bridge and strode across the gravel to the boy. Peering down at him he said "If you

throw one more rock into that pool I'm going to throw you in after it."

Matthew's jaw must have dropped in amazement, but before he could figure out if the angler was serious, the man had stepped to the edge of the gravel, shaken out some line, and on his first cast jerked out a 13 inch trout. Turning to the boy he said "You see? There's fish in this creek. Tell you what I'll do: If you promise not to throw any more rocks I'll give you this trout. Matthew is no dummy--he took the fish.

I fished upstream towards the bridge, all the while keeping an eye



on the other angler. I caught one fish and it seemed as though every time I looked up he was into another one. The two of us finally met on the gravel bar and he told me what had transpired. I thanked him for the fish and the lesson he gave Matthew. Then I gutted the fish and showed him what it had eaten. He asked me if I matched the hatch, and volunteered that he didn't know how. Then he resumed his perch on the bridge and, standing in full view of very trout in that pool, dispassionately caught another half dozen fish. Clearly this man knew what he was doing: Naturally, I had to talk to him.

I caught up with him again and learned that his name was Mike Hull. He had a better-than-ample belly and about a thousand flies stuck in his fly patch. His vest was grimy with seasons of sweat, bug juice and fly floatant; and its pockets were lined with a lifetime accumulation of flies. But when he wanted to show me the fly he fished from the beginning of the season to the end, he reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a little box from which he extracted a little confection he called a caddis emerger. It was a slender little fly with a bright green body, a deer hair wing angled low over the body and a wisp of synthetic fur to imitate the nymphal shock--Hull's emerger.

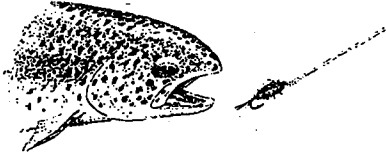
As we talked on the bridge he stripped off a few yards of line and cast the fly back into the pool. He told me that he didn't tie flies, but had someone tie those for him. He jerked in another fish while I focused on his technique: As the fly swung downstream in the current, Mike would jerk the line a few times and then deftly re-position the fly in another part of the pool. After letting it drift a moment he would tug the fly a few times and then reposition it again and repeat the process.

Innumerable trout succumbed to the simple fly and its owner's clever and exhaustive presentation. Mike Hull offered me one of his flies and I took it, but that isn't all I took. I copied it--and it works.

-Mike Alwin

(Editor's Note: Your editor wishes to confess that he abused the privileges of his office by immediately taking Michael's typewritten story down to Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, throwing it on Bob's desk and saying "Gimmee a dozen of these things." Bob
(continued on back page)

(continued from front page).
 proclaimed the fly to be a "Lafontaine
 emergent sparkle pupa" (or something
 like that) and declared that he had
 none in the shop. In other words, my
 inside information got me nowhere--so
 I'll either have to learn to tie, or bum
 one from Michael.)



ONLY 63 DAYS

Until Kiap - TU - Wish's
 Christmas Auction!
 And we need donations!
 (We've already received items
 ranging from books to a
 handwoven coverlet!)

Chapter News

Many thanks to Bob Mitchell for
 his splendid presentation at
 September's meeting. The Mitchells
 keep coming through for
 Kiap-TU-Wish month after month.
 How many times have we thanked
 them in this space? Well--thanks
 again.

Kiap-TU-Wish member emeritus
 Roger Fairbanks was profiled in Jim
 Bennett's Outdoor Trails and Tales
 column in several western Wisconsin
 newspapers. Roger was profiled as the
 long-time sportsman and
 conservationist that we know him as,
 and he managed to work Trout
 Unlimited into the interview. Thanks,
 Roger!

Kiap-TU-Wish also made its way
 into the River Falls paper with that
 paper's rediscovery of the Kinni.
 Apparently some of the staff there ran
 across Jim Humphrey's profile of the
 Kinni in Fly Fisherman Magazine and
 the paper is now trying to inform the
 city's residents about what a gem of a
 stream they have in their back yards.

Also in River Falls, Kiap-TU-Wish
 bids farewell to Jane Benson of the
 city planner's office. Jane was a good
 friend of TU and we will miss her.

MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, Oct. 4
 8:00 p.m.
 The Sport Club (Hudson, Wisc.)

Kiap-TU-Wish president Jon Jacob's
 fragile, easily bruised ego took another
 pounding last month with the low
 attendance at the September meeting.
 Maybe it was because fishing season
 was still in progress back then, but
 for whatever reason Jon is
 counterattacking by initiating a new
 raffle format at the October meeting.
 Jon promises better prizes, more
 excitement, and--hopefully--a packed
 Sports Club.

This month's meeting will also
 feature (we hope--last-minute details
 are being ironed out) a fisheries
 pathologist. He'll tell us about some
 microscopic predators that prey upon
 our local trout. So be sure to come
 and help prop up Jon Jacobs' ego.

KIAP-TU-WISH CHAPTER

TROUT UNLIMITED

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