

Kiap-TU-Wish Trout Unlimited October 2003

Andy Lamberson Resigns

By Jonathan Jacobs

Citing work and travel commitments, Andy Lamberson resigned as chapter president in September. Mr. Lamberson poured countless volunteer hours into Kiap-TU-Wish, serving as either as an officer or as a member of the board of directors continuously since 1989. His contributions are both too numerous to recall and to mention in great detail, but here are some highlights: He spearheaded the production of the award-winning video *A Storm on the Horizon*, a documentary on the effect of stormwater and urban development on trout streams. He assisted the City of River Falls in seeking a 205J grant for the development of the city's stormwater control ordinance. Mr. Lamberson was also active in stream improvement projects and the development of the chapter's web site as well.

In accordance with ARTICLE IV, Section 4 of the chapter's by-laws, Mark Waschek has become president and will serve in that role for the balance of the unexpired term.

Speak to the Board

Opinion by Michael Alwin

At the March meeting the membership passed the following resolution:

"Whereas the membership of Kiap-TU-Wish believes the Kinnickinnic to be a valuable, high quality river and whereas the State of Wisconsin has designated the Kinnickinnic as a Priority Watershed, I move that the Kiap-TU-Wish membership direct the Chapter's Board to increase its efforts to protect the Kinnickinnic by adopting the following strategies:

1. Continuing to work with the City of River Falls on stormwater and development issues.
2. Notifying all interested news media about the continued threats to the river.
3. Organizing public meetings in the city of River Falls to initiate a dialog with the residents about the various impacts of development.
4. Contacting other levels of government (township, county and state) for assistance in protecting the river.
5. Contacting other conservation groups (National TU, State Council, Sierra Club, River Alliance, etc.) for assistance in protecting the river.
6. Seeking out membership attorneys and other interested attorneys for pro bono legal advice and direction."

I hope it surprises you to learn that in the ensuing six months the board has adopted exactly none of these six strategies. When you reread the resolution you'll note that it directs the Board to adopt specific strategies. The language doesn't say that these strategies are optional. Six months. Now I hope you're getting irritated.

Fortunately there is some cause for hope. At the September meeting we heard some encouraging news. First, the lawsuit between Kinnickinnic Township and the city of River Falls is ongoing. The trial date is set for January '04. Nothing can be done on the Hagen property until the case is settled. That gives us a little time. Second, Kent Johnson is still attending meetings in River Falls to persuade the city that they can improve their efforts to protect the River. Kent uses up a couple weeks of his vacation time to attend these meetings. Clearly, he's still passionate about its protection. Third, the new CEO at Hans Hagen Homes appears to be more interested in stormwater infiltration than Mr. Hagen was, being not only receptive but semi-enthusiastic.

There is time. I urge you to attend the October meeting (Wed. Oct. 1st, 7:00 PM) and tell the Board they should immediately begin adopting those strategies to protect the Kinnickinnic. We can't afford to waste another six months. Assume that you will be asked to help. This is a positive experience. Let's unleash the power of the Chapter and do everything we can to protect this wonderful stream.

Michael Alwin of Stillwater, MN is a long-time member of Kiap-TU-Wish.

Jonathan Jacobs responds: *Although I am a member of the chapter's Board of Directors, having been elected in March of this year, I am responding personally and not on behalf of the Board. In my opinion, Mr. Alwin's statements are a blend of the gospel truth and a modicum of hyperbole. As you may know, Michael is one of my closest friends and the rightful criticism he delivers here stings. However, the board has been addressing this resolution and, for that matter, items 1, 4 and 5 have been part of an ongoing effort that predates the resolution. Item 2 will require better effort, probably on my part as editor of RipRap. Item 3 is a huge undertaking that will require YOUR help and if you are an attorney or are well enough acquainted with one to ask for help, Item 6 is yours for the taking. Obviously, what has been most sorely lacking is a coordinated, well-rounded and well-communicated effort to both involve the membership and to keep it up to date and informed on the issues and I believe the board will do a better job beginning now.*

Tom Helgeson headlines October meeting

By Jonathan Jacobs

Tom Helgeson, publisher of *Midwest Flyfishing* and a long-time friend of the chapter is our October speaker. His presentation is *The Traveling Angler*. Mr. Helgeson has fished from the arctic to the tropics and is a talented photographer and storyteller. Join us at Bob Smith's Sports Club, 601 2nd Street in Hudson on Wednesday, October 1st for an evening of socializing and important updates on chapter activities. Dinner is available at 6 PM and the meeting begins at 7 PM.

RipRap needs your help

By Jonathan Jacobs

As of September 22, the treasurer's report indicated that there is a balance of a little more than \$1,300 in the RipRap publication fund. This is likely to be depleted at the end of this year's publication cycle. Remember, the board expects RipRap to be substantially self-funding. Remember, too, that your dues are for the most part retained by the national organization. So, if you enjoy RipRap and feel that it's the most useful tool we have for chapter communications and updates, please support it with a tax-deductible donation. Please make your check payable to Kiap-TU-Wish and write "RipRap fund" on the memo line and mail it to the chapter post office box.

Continuum

By John Koch

It's not really much to look at. A little bit too big to call a stick, but not quite big enough to call a log, the piece of wood is a more or less straight, 8 inches long by about an inch in diameter. Black on one end, fading to gray on the other, it's splotted here and there with an ochre colored mud.

It smells funny, too.

I pulled it out of the bank of a small stream close to my home. This small stream runs through an open field, a former pasture on which once grazed a herd of cattle. For what ever reason, the farmer who's land it is that the creek runs through got tired of grazing his cattle out there. The cattle went somewhere else, and all that's left now is the creek running through the open field.

I was there at the creek with my seven-year-old daughter. We had met a couple of friends of ours there, one a habitat biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the other his seasonal assistant. Together, we were waiting for more people to show up, all of whom were going to help out with a restoration project that still another friend had organized. The project centered on restoring this stream, subject to a century of non-existent land management practices, to a point where its wild brook trout would be able to not only survive, but reproduce, as well. Shocking surveys indicated that only a very few of the small char lived in the cold, clear water; the streams sediment load allowed only the barest minimum of cover for the fish to survive.

While we were waiting, my friend caught me up on the details of the project. He showed me where the wooden "lunkers" had been placed; basically a large wooden pallet, a lunker is placed along the bank of a stream, under the water. Rock is piled on top of the structure, and dirt is bulldozed over that. Seeded with grass, it eventually becomes a cut-bank, accomplishing a number of things all at once. The wooden structure becomes home to many types of fish, both trout and other species. The once collapsing banks are now stabilized with turf-covered rock, and the now narrowed stream, swifter and colder than before, is better able to scour down to its original gravel beds.

My friend, the biologist, mentioned that he had pulled a very interesting piece of wood out of the sediment making up the banks of the river, down underneath the water.

"I've sent it in to be Carbon 14 dated, but I'm pretty sure it's between 4 and 8 thousand years old," he said.

Come again?

"There a bunch of it down here - here, let me show you." We walked over to the bank, and he pointed down to the edge of the stream. Sticking out of the bank under the water was a snag of wood. I stumbled down to it and pointed a questioning finger at it.

"Yeah, that's one of them. They're all over down through there," he replied. My friend went on to explain how you could tell the ancient lumber's approximate age by the angle and depth of the wood's deposition. Below the agricultural runoff of the previous century lay the former stream bank. Below this lay gravel and fine grained, wind blown loess clay beds deposited by the glaciers. Sticking out of this was an ugly piece of wood, a little bit too big to call a stick, but not quite big enough to call a log.

As I grabbed hold and pulled the stinking, mud-covered branch out of the bank, my imagination swam with the possibilities...

By its appearance, it was one of the primary branches from a large evergreen, perhaps either a hemlock or a spruce. It is almost certain that the tree provided shade and cover to a wide range of animal life: 1,000 years ago bear, carnivorous cats, rodents and ungulates such as deer, elk, moose and woodland caribou prowled the Wisconsin woods. If the piece of wood turns out to be truly ancient, that is, 6,000 to 8,000 years old, then it's quite possible that maybe a woolly rhinoceros or even a mammoth had browsed along it's branches.

The tree might have shaded this same creek, and while it's almost certain that this little river was running then as it is now in this general area, it is anybody's guess where exactly the stream bed lay that long ago. It would take a major excavation of the entire area to figure that out, and that isn't the point of this project. But if this was the streams original bed, brook trout were here. It would be something like a poem to say that the fish flashing beneath our feet were descendants of Pleistocene brookies, but that is probably not the case: most of Wisconsin's brookies, except in a few rare cases, came decades ago from Maine, brought here after the original stocks were choked out of Wisconsin's streams by logging and agricultural runoff.

If the branch turns out to be not quite as old as we hope, the possibilities still remain amazing. Perhaps the tree this branch came from sheltered some of the earliest Wisconsinites. I watched my dark haired daughter playing in the creek; I could imagine a similar daughter 2,000 years ago, playing under the majestic evergreen that my stick came from. Kneeling at the base of the tree among its gnarled roots, she would have laughed into the shady, sunlit gloom as the babbling brook splashed her. Or maybe she gazed at an approaching thunderstorm from the tree, clinging to my branch as she worriedly watched the purple clouds build in the West, lightning walking the path of the primitive gods towards her and her family's camp...

It's not really much to look at. A little bit too big to call a stick, but not quite big enough to call a log, it smells funny, too. But the story this branch tells is amazing; it's history as vast as the centuries.

John Koch of Spring Valley, WI is the chapter's Stream Improvement Chairman and a frequent contributor to RipRap.

Chapter to Update Volunteer Lists

By Jonathan Jacobs

I attempted to use our stream improvement list last week to call folks about the Eau Galle project in Spring Valley. When I saw behind my name an e-mail address that's at least four years out of date, it made me doubt the lists utility. Too, the chapter needs more volunteers in more capacities than ever before. We intend to circulate a sign-up sheet at every chapter meeting. You'll be able to indicate your area of special interest, be it stream improvement, education, development issues, legal counsel, etc. However, if it is impractical for you to attend chapter meetings, please contact me via conventional or electronic mail and list your name, telephone number, e-mail address and interests. Remember, if you check the chapter's web site (The address appears in the header of every page of this newsletter.), you will find a calendar of events that may be helpful in planning your volunteer efforts. However, with the number and complexities of the projects in which the chapter is involved, the need for volunteer help from every member is crucial, so expect to be called after you've signed up.

State reaches settlement with Jon De Farm in pollution case

Source: *Midwest Environmental Advocates*

Baldwin, WI – In a settlement agreement signed August 28, 2003, advocates for the Rush River scored a major victory in protecting the river from Jon De Farm, Inc. a livestock factory that had caused polluted runoff to tributaries of the Rush River for the past several years. The Rush River is a highly prized trout stream in northwestern Wisconsin and receives special protection under state law.

In November 2002, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, at the request of the Department of Natural Resources, filed a lawsuit against Jon De Farm for violating federal environmental and public health protections by illegally discharging untreated animal waste directly into the Rush River.

Several local groups from over four counties have been working together to raise thousands of dollars to help pay for stream projects on area streams including Rush River. According to Harold Fosmo, Jr., of the Western WI Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, the restoration efforts led by the DNR are being completed with money and labor from the area sportsmen's clubs.

"This settlement is great news for the Rush River and other streams," said Fosmo. "Hopefully, from now on, everyone will work together to prevent development from ruining our natural resources. If you observe a pollution problem along streams, report it to the DNR or a sportsman club member."

"With this settlement agreement, the Wisconsin Department of Justice has taken one more step towards protecting our public waters from careless manure management by industrialized agriculture" said Andrew Hanson, attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., the law center that had represented local chapters of the Izaak Walton League of America and Sierra Club in their efforts to obtain a strong settlement agreement that would protect the Rush River.

The Sierra Club's John Muir Chapter and the Izaak Walton League of America originally planned to file a federal lawsuit against Jon De Farm but delayed it after the Wisconsin Department of Justice initiated its lawsuit.

"Our goal is a clean and healthy Rush River for everyone to enjoy," said Caryl Terrell, Director of the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter. "This settlement requires improved manure handling practices to ensure protection of the Rush River."

State v. Jon De Farm, Inc. Settlement Agreement Quick Facts

The settlement agreement requires Jon De Farm to:

- Pay \$42,898 in penalties for past discharges of manure to tributaries to the Rush River;
- Establish and maintain vegetative buffers and grassed waterways adjacent to the fields on which it spreads manure to prevent pollutants from getting into nearby waters;
- Improve manure separation technology to capture polluted runoff and perform daily inspections of the conveyors to remove any solid accumulations;
- Stop spreading manure on frozen ground or snow;
- Arrange for a crop nutrient management consultant to inspect landspreading manure plans to ensure compliance with the law.

Balance

Editorial by Jonathan Jacobs

The basic problem with American fly-fishing literature is found in the practice of American fly-fishing – much of it takes place in the shadow of the bulldozer. Environmental destruction has been a haunting specter to this country's angler since the beginning of this [the 20th] century.

-Harmon Henkin, **Fly Tackle**

Welcome back to another season of Kiap-TU-Wish meetings and another volume of RipRap. The chapter is in transition as we wish a heartfelt "Thanks and Best Wishes" to Andy Lamberson and a sincere "Good Luck" to our new president, Mark Waschek. Back in what were much simpler times two decades ago, I served as chapter president. Even though the issues facing the chapter weren't nearly so complex then, I know first hand that the presidency can be a burden as well as a joy. Much of the burden stems from the fact that, for all of us, the protection and preservation of our trout streams has gone beyond being a passion for us and has become a must-not-fail mission. This sense of mission can often preclude us from giving much thought to why we took it up in the first place. I confess that I am at least as guilty of this as the next fellow. Evidence of that often shows up on these pages. I look back at what I've written in the last couple of years and altogether too often looks like, as Henkin wrote of Ernest Schwiebert's non-technical works, "It always seems to be twilight in his angling world, and he has written as if he were eighty ever since he was twenty." The problems facing our environment are terrible, terrible enough to turn us into scolds and curmudgeons and causing us to forget how we felt when we first became involved in all of this. So, right now I want to attempt to brush some of the grumpiness away and tell you a story about some angling I did this summer. I hope you enjoy it because I need to tell it in an effort to recover some of the sense of joy I originally found in fly-fishing for trout

First, you must understand that, despite all the fishing I've done through the years, I continue to display a thoroughgoing ineptitude astream. I'm prone to misinterpreting the natural phenomena around me and I'm way more capable than most of turning a golden opportunity into a leaden disaster, so when I report on something that's gone right, I'm not so much bragging as expressing amazement. Second, this is a tale about mayflies and trout. Both are indicator species in a healthy environment and the fact that they're present in this story is, I think, happy news.

On June 11, I went angling with John Koch and Bill Stieger on the Rush River above Highway 72. It was a gorgeous evening, cool with little humidity, but the fishing was slow. In spite of the slack pace, both my companions caught a good-sized fish, while I settled for a couple of little guys. I saw something on about dusk, however, that put me onto something that I put to good use later. It was a large mayfly. It came rumbling by me in a way that reminded me of a big, multi-engine propeller-driven aircraft. I was unfamiliar with this creature, but some subsequent research indicated that it was an American March Brown, or *Stenonema vicarium*.

Almost two weeks later, on June 13, in the height of the Sulphur hatch, I was on another stretch of Wisconsin trout stream fishing on a glorious summer evening. I had a good evening of it and felt pretty good about my lot in life as I ambled back downstream toward my truck. I'd tarried long and on my way I saw the most beautiful moonrise I've ever seen. The full moon came up slowly from exactly between two coulee ridges, glowing warm and orange against the blue-black sky. I that darkening sky were March Brown spinners and in the riffle below them at my feet, sleek bronze trout crashed sporadically to the surface to eat them. Naturally, I was unequipped to deal with this.

I was back on June 20. In the intervening week I'd thrown together a few flies that represented what I thought a March Brown spinner out to look like: Size 10 hook, moose body hair tail, an tan body ribbed with brown size A rod winding thread (Weird, maybe, but it was what I had on hand) and a wound grizzly hackle collar. I started in late afternoon, fishing a blue winged olive to sporadic risers with little success. When that didn't work, I tried an unweighted nymph under a dot of strike putty. The trout attacked the putty with great vigor while ignoring my nymph. Later, when the sulphur mayflies appeared, I did better. I didn't catch every rising fish, but by using an emerger, a hair-winged dun and a rusty spinner, I did well enough to feel good about walking away from rising fish to get back down to the riffle where I'd seen the big spinners a week earlier. My Mr. Magoo-like eyesight made it difficult to tie on a fly, even when I held it against the darkening sky. Fish were feeding avidly when I flung that fly out over the riffle. I heard a splash and set the hook. The rod bent against the weight of a heavy-bodied fourteen inch brown trout. One cast later it bowed, bucked and throbbed when an eighteen inch brown engulfed my fly. It was time to go and I was ready. The waning three quarter moon between those ridges looked very nearly as wonderful as that perfectly round orb had a week earlier.



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The chapter Holiday Banquet is set for Thursday, December 4. Look for additional details about this exciting event in the November issue of RipRap.

The development discussion originally slated for the September meeting has been re-scheduled to the November meeting.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

OCTOBER 1: TOM HELGESON, THE TRAVELING ANGLER
NOVEMBER 5: DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
DECEMBER 4: HOLIDAY BANQUET (NOTE THURSDAY DATE)
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, OCTOBER 24.