

# RIPRAP

• Restoration • Improvement • Preservation through Research And Projects •

October 2006

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## Trout fishing

*"Give a man a fish and he has food for a day; teach him how to fish and you can get rid of him for the entire weekend."*

– Zenna Schaffer



Michele Koehler's job as a fisheries biologist has taken her many places, including Alaska..

## Biologist to discuss western stream restoration projects

By Greg Dietl

New chapter member Michele Koehler will be the guest speaker at the October 4 membership meeting.

Koehler has an MS in Aquatic and Fishery Sciences from the University of Washington. She has recently relocated from the West Coast to eastern Minnesota.

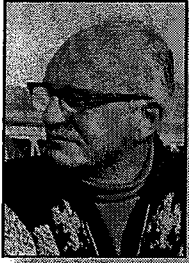
She has worked as a Research Biologist on trout and salmon restoration projects and other areas of her expertise in the Pacific Northwest, Alaska and the Midwest. She

has worked on fish diet studies, wetland restoration, watershed assessments, tall grass prairie restoration projects to name a few. Koehler has done research planning, data management, field work, data compilation and analysis and presentation.

Her topic for the October meeting will be "Biological monitoring of restoration sites in Oregon for trout and salmon habitat".

Please come hear her presentation and welcome her to the chapter.

# Trout from the Lakes of Fall



By James R. Humphrey

Jim Humphrey, of Oak Park Heights, MN, is the co-author of Wisconsin and Minnesota Trout Streams. His new series is anecdotal, discursive and opinionated, according to the author. The essays may eventually appear in a collection. Humphrey welcomes comments, including rebuttals. "A bit of controversy is good," he says.

"What is so rare as a day in June?" A deep blue sky October day when the sun slants through the leaves of trembling aspen, and a subtle breeze slips softly through the tops of pines. That is a day to be memorialized in a poem, when rainbow trout are finding Woolly Buggers in leaf litter in quiet lakes.

Trout fishing is not all "Pony rides on a May morning," quoting Pooh. On another day, that same gentle lake can produce a misery under the cold, gray, ominous skies of November, when wind whistles a banshee cry through brooding pines.

The primitive county park on Sawmill Lake in Wisconsin was deserted, the dock rolled on shore, the picnic table where we spread our gear and opened our Thermos to hot coffee was still tilted. The day was clear and cool; a breeze from the southwest riffled the bay and pushed a scum of surface detritus our way. And underneath, we knew the leaf litter was piling up, dragonfly nymphs were hunting prey, and rainbows would be foraging for nymphs. In deep water, backswimmers were diving, carrying their plastrons of air with them, then rising for another breath. Life was good.

We were laying olive Woolly Buggers on the bottom and retrieving them with short pulls, releasing an occasional 12 inch rainbow. The hatchery trout measured from 12 to 17 inches. Dick Frantes made a noise. When I saw the bend in his rod I reeled in. That was not a tiddler. I waited; the reel screamed once, stopped. The rod held its arc. The trout made another run for the center of the lake; the reel sang, and Dick was into the backing. That brood fish was 24 and ½ inches long—a mama rainbow. Dick slumped against a log, too played out even to comment on my inferior fishmanship.

There is not much skill necessary to fish the lakes of fall. First you read the license regulations to mark the lakes that are planted. Many Wisconsin and Minnesota lakes are open in October; a few even later, but not all are planted every year. You might even call the fish managers of the DNR in the area to ask for planting information; but we never did that. Somehow, following the tank truck seemed unsportsmanlike. A report of a few years ago noted that Minnesota planted 179 lakes with stream trout. Wisconsin lists more than 120 in its regulations guide. There is also a host of spring ponds that itinerant anglers might call lakes. Most Minnesota lakes are in the northern counties. Wisconsin lakes are distributed among the northern and central counties. Some Wisconsin lakes are open later than October, but we never fished Sawmill later than the week before Thanksgiving.

Heavy duty rods are not necessary. Woolly Buggers, backswimmers and the late Jim Loga's Wobble Ace are useful. We have seen Jim take a large trout from Tozer Lake near Spooner, Wisconsin, even before we made our first casts.

Occasionally the rainbows will be engaged in foreplay in the shallows; then they may pick up a small Adams, or similar nondescript fly that annoys them.

You meet interesting people on the lakes of fall. I parked at the west side of Sawmill one bright October day, turned around, and Lo! there was Ted Mackmiller getting out of his car. We should have made that trip together, as we did some time later on Glen Lake. While I was putting a rod together at Glen Lake, Ted made one cast and brought a trout to hand. Lucky, I guess. Square Lake, north of Stillwater, Minnesota, is one of the best for fall rainbows.

# ● Angling disasters

By Jonathan Jacobs

Etymologists tell us that the likely originators of the words “snafu” and “fubar” were American armed services personnel in World War II. Both words are acronyms. “Snafu” stands for Situation Normal – All Fouled Up and “fubar” for Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition. I’ve done a little bowdlerizing here. If you think the lads who whipped the Axis in four short years said “fouled”, bless you for your childlike innocence. I’ve come to think of these two terms as ideal adjectives to describe my angling. In fact, the usual state of affairs for me is a snafu to the point that I don’t think to use the word. I’ve also crossed the snafu threshold and proceeded to fubar in ways that are, in retrospect, mostly amusing.

● There have also been too many fubars that could have, with slightly worse luck, ended very badly, indeed. Let me tell you about a few of both types.

## Equipment fubars

When I was a lad, I ate Wheaties for an entire summer because, for about forty (or so it seemed) box top coupons and two bucks shipping and handling, one could get from General Mills a Johnson Century spincast reel. I haven’t eaten Wheaties since, but I hung in there long enough then to get my reel. My parents gave me a brand new fiberglass rod to go with this metallic green wonder. I was puffed up with pride of ownership. I gathered up my new gear and hit the lake. This was the first summer I was allowed to use my father’s outboard. I thought I’d do a little trolling with my new rig. The propeller grabbed my monofilament line and before I could either release the freespool or shut down the motor, the prop had eaten the tip of

my brand new rod. That was my first fubar. Fortunately, my father was one of the all-time great repairmen of the pocket knife/pliers/string/baling wire school and he miraculously rendered the mess functional again.

Much more recently, I purchased a premium fly rod manufactured right here in the Midwest. It must be made of the finest crystal because I’ve broken it three times. Actually, it’s broken itself. Twice the male ferrule in the butt section collapsed and the rod simply caved in. Both times this happened in circumstances that made it easy to overcome the malfunction. Once, though, I was on a bridge to bridge adventure covering new water. I’d slogged through a disappointing amount of sand before finally finding a good looking stretch of water. I cast my woolly bugger to a log jam and had an instantaneous take. I set up and the rod exploded. I’d hooked a log, of course. So, there I was, a long way from anywhere with my rod reduced to useless shards and the day’s fishing shot. Hoping that any reasonable landowner would be sympathetic to my plight, I plotted a cross country route to the nearest county road and trespassed my way out.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the rod has a lifetime warranty and is once again whole. My trust in it, though, remains shattered. I store my rods in my home, but I have banished the infernal piece of plastic under discussion here to the garage, where it sits in its case like a malevolent genie in a bottle, unable to spread its bad juju to my other rods.

In the next edition, I will recall some fubars that involved getting wet.

*“Hoping that any reasonable landowner would be sympathetic to my plight, I plotted a cross country route to the nearest county road and trespassed my way out.”*

**Jon Jacobs**

## Lines from the President

Welcome back! Another fleeting summer has come and gone. I hope all your summer plans came to be. Kiap volunteers were busy with projects last spring and summer. These projects were notable in that they were particularly collaborative. We joined forces with Laughing Trout Club, Eau Galle Rush River Sportsman's Club, TCTU; we had a participant from Hiawatha Chapter. We continue to work with Ojibseau Chapter and Dunn County Fish and Game on Gilbert Creek. This collaborative effort is important because more and more a spectrum of groups are involved in funding and working on projects. Increasingly, we are called upon to raise funds for projects and work with other groups. Our chapter members have responded well to these challenges.

This summer the Executive Board authorized raising our commitment to the KRLT by increasing our membership dollar contribution. The Board also committed this year's spring appeal funds to a potential land purchase by the KRLT on the lower river. The Board also is going to target next year's spring appeal funds to go towards this same commitment. More will be written in a later issue about this potential purchase. This is one of those rare opportunities to get a good piece of land out of harm's way. The Board authorized chapter membership in The River Alliance of Wisconsin.

### Communication

I want to thank Andy Lamberson for his continued work on our website. The website is one of our most important communication tools. I urge all of you to check it frequently. Please register for the discussion page and get on the email list. I post all work events and

other news on the discussion page. I try to be as timely as I can with the news. Often, weather, DNR schedules, and other communication issues prevent giving you much lead time in scheduling your time. So, if you check frequently, I may be able to save you a trip or give you an early alert to a future event.

Please feel free to call me at home any time with any issues you may have concerning the chapter.

### Board Membership

Board member Chad Borenz has resigned his board post because of family commitments. I want to thank Chad for all the work he has done for the chapter. Chad worked on many projects, served on the board, worked on chapter award plaques and provided door prizes for meetings. We wish him well and hope to see him at meetings and on the stream as time permits.

If you are interested in pursuing that long held interest in becoming a board member, please contact any board member or me. The chapter also has committee chairs that are vacant. You will be hearing that from me also in the coming months.

### Banquet Planning

Plans for the 2006 Banquet are in the works. The Banquet will again be at Tartan Park Clubhouse (thanks to John Koch). The date is December 7. There is work to be done so if you want to help with the planning, please call Mike Alwin at Bob Mitchell's Fly Shop, 651-770-5854, or me. There will be more details later.

OK, I've said enough.

Greg Dietl

*The website is one of our most important communication tools. I urge all of you to check it frequently. Please register for the discussion page and get on the email list. I post all work events and other news on the discussion page.*

**Greg Dietl**

## Ellsworth High School takes an interest in Isabelle Creek

By Gary Horvath

Last winter Ellen Sowka a Biology Instructor with the Ellsworth High School called to obtain a copy of the Chapters Video "Storm on the Horizon". Ms. Sowka stated that they were interested in coming over to study the Kinni. I asked if she had considered Isabelle Creek which was situated just south of Ellsworth and an excellent trout stream.



2 which she built around Isabelle Creek.

All I had to do was provide the students with a short synopsis about Trout Unlimited's mission and the activities we participate in. We then headed to the creek where I helped the students gather data. Students broke into small groups and performed various tests at different sections of the river.

Students gathered flow, temperature, DO, turbidity and

I pointed out that Ellsworth is situated on the headwaters of the creek and stormwater posed great risks to its future.

This spring Ms. Sowka contacted me about participating in her Sophomore Biology/Environmental curriculum on June

sampled invertebrates. The section of stream selected was just above the area where springs enter, and the stream starts carrying trout. After a long hike up a large hill we headed back to school and discussed our findings.

## KinniFest a success

By Mike Alwin

June 3rd was a splendid day, sunny and bright with just enough of a breeze to keep you comfortable. It was a perfect day for a group of spirited conservation groups to launch "KINNI FEST," an all-day festival designed to hopefully pique peoples' interest in the river and how to help preserve it.

As part of that effort, a few volunteers from Kiap-TU-Wish put on an abbreviated casting clinic for interested citizens, the hope

being that these folks would fall in love with the river and the hypnotic spell of the long rod and decide to get emotionally involved with what is inarguably one of Wisconsin's finest trout streams.

Alas, we don't know if it worked but if it didn't, it wasn't for lack of effort. The Chapter Members, and friends, who helped that day were **Bill Lovegren, Greg Dietl and Bob Bradham**. They are splendid guys and I can't say enough good things about them.

# Kiap-TU-Wish Projects

## Volunteers make stream improvements on Rush, South Fork of Kinni

### The Rush

Kiap TU Wish volunteers worked on the Rush River in Martel this summer, beginning in July and ending in September.

The Laughing Trout Fly Fishing Club of Martel owned the land and sold public easement to help finance the project. The WDNR, Kiap, Laughing Trout members (many are KTU and TCTU members) and the Eau Galle Rush River Sportsman's

Club built LUNKER structures, seeded and mulched the site.

This was an intense, short project that converted over 1000 feet of flat shallow water into prime brown trout habitat. The project deepened and narrowed the river, armored the banks, provided bank and in stream boulder structures, and increased stream flow. The project site is between the second and third bridges in the town of Martel.

### The South Fork

Kiap volunteers worked with the WDNR from April into July on restoration of the South Fork of the Kinnickinnic River east of River Falls along Hwy 29. Volunteers brushed, built structures, seeded and mulched. Over 150 hours were worked by volunteers on this project. The South Fork has strong spring flows from a sand spring upstream that is amazing to see. If you follow the stream up you will find this spring; it's worth the hike.

John Sours and Nate Anderson worked their magic on this stream with great bank work, structures, plunge pools and in stream rocks. On July 11, the last day of the project, the ambient temp was in the 90s and the water temp was 58 degrees. Help was also provided by members of Laughing Trout Club.

Thanks to volunteers who helped. Their names are listed in the next column.

### Rush River

Randy Arnold  
Ron Zaudke  
John Koch  
Nick Westcott  
Dennis Potter  
Jim Thompson  
Stu Dahlman  
Lothar Zegelin  
Bruce Orensteen  
John Hedberg  
Dan McKenzie  
Curt Poquette  
Arby Linder  
Gary Richardson  
Hap Lutter  
Miles Cross  
Warren Schade  
Randy Lage  
Rich Frick  
Mike Andert  
Sarah Sanford  
Mike Colling  
Bill Woods  
Greg Dietl  
Bob Lorentzen  
Jim Donoho  
Josh Nelson

### South Fork

Randy Arnold  
Ron Zaudke  
Nick Westcott  
Dennis Potter  
Dan Froseth  
Matt Voss  
Jim Thompson  
Ted Mackmiller  
Bob Lorentzen  
Bob Bradham  
Briam Madsen  
Sarah Sanford  
Mike Colling  
Mike Mattson  
Greg Dietl  
Gary Horvath  
Dennis Fritz  
Marty Engel  
Lynne Lorentzen  
Greg Thompson  
Chuck Goosen  
Mike Andert  
Steve Carlton

## Sanford serves as Chapter Ambassador for two outstate members

By Greg Dietl

Chapter member Sarah Sanford took two TU members on a guided tour of KTU projects and for some fishing time on the Rush River on Wednesday, 9-13, as part of the National Convention held in Minneapolis that week.

She toured with Mary Tealdi, Oakland, CA and Loren Albright, Sand Point, ID. I attended the convention on Friday, 9-15 and met Mary.

She expressed her gratitude for the outstanding job Sarah did on the tour and

said she truly felt she had made a new friend. I'm not expressing very well just how pleased Mary was with her day with Sarah; but, she said she is going to make a financial contribution to the chapter to show her gratitude.



Mary Tieldi, one of Sarah Sanford's guest anglers, tries her luck on a local stream.

I also heard that her other guest was extremely pleased with his trip. Thank you to Sarah for being such an outstanding ambassador for the chapter.

## Drift boat in good hands

By Greg Dietl

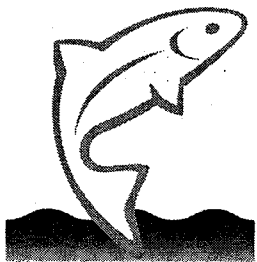
The Chapter's Drift Boat raffle was held at the last meeting in May. Scott Swanson of Oakdale, MN was the winner of the raffle and took possession of the boat. In mid-summer, through a turn of events, the drift boat became available for purchase.

Again, through a rather sudden series of events, Jonathon Jacobs was able to purchase the boat and now owns and floats it. Actually, Jon was able to take the boat on its maiden voyage. Yes, it floats, is a work of art and function on the water and it does not leak. It

is rather fitting that Jon owns the boat since I suspect no one wanted it more than he.

I can attest to what a wonderful craft it is since Jon kindly asked me to join him on a float trip on the Flambeau in August. We floated, rowed and fished for smallies for about 8 hours on an almost cloudless 85 degree Sunday. We caught fish, too. Jon is an excellent ship's captain, host, smallmouth fly tyer and angler.

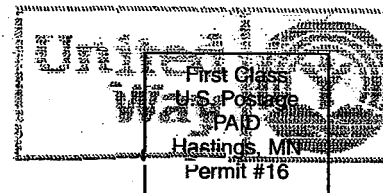
That boat has had quite a journey and is in good hands.



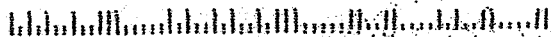
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Deadline for November RIPRAP is Friday, October 20.