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News and Views from Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

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Wisconsin Trout

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Fall 1989

Soviet naturalists observe T.U. methods

Fourteen Soviet naturalists were in Wautoma on Sept. 28 to observe some of Trout Unlimited's methods for fish conservation.

The Soviets had an event-filled trip from their homeland to Wautoma. First their luggage was lost enroute and Trout Unlimited had to have them outfitted with clothing. Then while in Milwaukee, they were trapped in an elevator at their hotel and had to be rescued by the fire department. Happily there were no out of the ordinary events in Wautoma.

When they arrived in Wautoma, they had a picnic lunch at Bird Creek Park. From the picnic lunch the group was bused to Chaffee Creek to view an

artificial spawning riffle and sand trap combination project. The second stop was at Lunch Creek to see an example of stream bank debris caused by cattle and how Trout Unlimited had corrected a portion of the damage.

The final stop was to allow the Soviets to observe a stretch of the West Branch of the White River. Here the Soviets were shown an example of geoweb, a polyethylene material, that had been placed on the bank several years ago.

Bob Hunt, head of trout research, was in charge of the field trip with the help of Edward Avery. Robert L. Herbst, Executive Director of Trout Unlimited and Tom Flesch, National

Director, were the coordinator of the trip.

At 6:30 p.m. there was a pig roast at Bird Creek Park hosted by the Central Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited. After the pig roast there was a get-together in the hospitality suite at the Silvercryst Motel.

On Sept. 29 they were scheduled to visit Davis Creek to see a typical Trout Unlimited volunteer project and Radley Creek to view a number of prefabricated structures installed a year ago. The last scheduled stops were at the Wild Rose State Hatchery and the Great Lakes Fisheries Research Center.



Dick Kraus

From the chairman

by Dick Kraus

Change is an inevitable process that allows any organization to improve or regress. How we manage change will determine whether it is positive or not. There have been several changes in the organization of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited in recent months that I want to share with you.

First, I must sadly report that there will be no State Council Banquet this coming January, 1990. The reasons for this include scheduling conflicts and that certain people had become "banqueted out". Plans for a 1991 State Council Banquet are now being considered. Because the banquet has been the major source of income for the council since 1984, the lack of one in 1990 will require that the Council take even more responsible management of its financial resources during the coming year.

Also, with this issue, Wisconsin T.U. has a different editor. Former State Council Chairman Mitch Bent of De Pere is replacing John Cantwell in that position. John, who received a National Trout Unlimited Award for his efforts, did an excellent job for us, and he will continue to work for Wisconsin T.U. as our Fundraising Chairman.

We have replacements in other areas, too. Winston Ostrow, a Green Bay attorney, has accepted the position of Legal Advisor. And Dave Johnson of Neshkoro has replaced me as chairman of the Water Resources Committee. We look for good work from both men.

On the down side, Judy Callens, who was our part-time Legislative Liaison in Madison, has left Wisconsin T.U. to join the Montana Department of Natural Resources. Judy kept us well-informed of legislative activities in the State Capitol, and we will miss her.

Please join me in congratulating these individuals in their new assignments, and in wishing them well in their responsibilities.



The Soviet naturalists arrived in Wautoma on Sept. 28, at 11:30 a.m. From left to right they are: (back row) Doctors P.A. Moyseyev, E.P. Moyseyeva, V.A. Sporor, V.B. Samakulov, T.N. Vinogradou, M.A. Kavarsin, A.I. Semko, E.L. Bakhtanskey, V.G. Martynov, R.O. Verro; (front row) T. Aniz, A.R. Mitans, I.N. Kamshilin and Dirin.

"Stewardship Fund" highlights State Budget

Despite threats of a full or partial veto from Governor Thompson's office, the Stewardship Fund, a budget item providing \$250 million for a variety of conservation and environmental efforts through the 1990's, remained in the state budget signed by the governor this past summer. The fund was added to the state budget as an amendment by Rep. Spencer Black (D-Madison), during the latter days of the Legislature's spring/summer session.

As written, the Stewardship Fund will provide \$25 million per year for the next ten years to help fund seven major areas of environmental concern:

- *\$125 for expansion of state parks, forests, and wildlife areas and for creation of a 77,000 Lower Wisconsin Riverway park;

- *\$35 million for maintenance of state parks and wildlife area facilities;

- *\$30 million for natural area and open space preservation in and near urban areas, and for purchase and development of local parks;

- *\$20 million for protection of 16,000 acres crucial to the survival of endangered plants and animals;

- *\$15 million for restoration of tens of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, especially prairies and wetlands;

- *\$15 million for completion and coordination of a statewide trail system for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding;

- *\$10 million for preservation of 2,000 miles of fragile streambank habitat.

A key element of Stewardship is the emphasis on partnerships between the state, local governments, private conservation organizations (like Trout Unlimited), and landowners. Many of the Fund's expenditures will be matching grants to local governments or conservation groups to encourage broad citizen involvement in meeting conservation goals. This will be very important to groups like TU, for it will enable the organization's fundraising efforts to be stretched because of the matching grant (50-50 cost sharing potential) of the Stewardship Fund.

Other highlights of the State Budget that are of importance to Trout Unlimited include:

- * downward re-estimates of Inland and Great Lakes Trout Stamp revenues by almost \$200,000 and \$508,000, respectively.

- * a decrease in DNR's budget of \$1.3 million in each of the next two years and a deletion of 12 positions to maintain a positive balance in the fish and wildlife account;

- * \$1.1 million to continue and expand mercury contamination studies related to acid deposition;

- * a one-time \$20,000 fund in 1989-1990 for water quality monitoring of the Pike River Watershed;

- * \$405,000 over next two years to increase staff support in wastewater management and water resources programs for the purpose of revising effluent limits on discharge permits in order to reduce toxic pollutants discharged into Wisconsin waterways in compliance with the new anti-degradation rules;

- * over \$4 million for the next two years to fund Wisconsin's share of the Great Lakes protection fund to finance projects related to protection, research, and cleanup of the Great Lakes.

State Council meets in Wautoma

The Wisconsin State Council of Trout Unlimited held its summer meeting on July 15 in Wautoma (Waushara County), with 10 of 22 chapters being represented. Chairman Dick Kraus called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

The meeting began with a presentation by Larry Claggett, Trout Specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), on the plight of the coldwater inland trout fishery in Northeastern and Southwestern Wisconsin. With data indicating trout population reductions in those two areas between 60-80% from two years ago due to drought and increased angler pressure on trout congregated in stream areas where there was sufficient water, DNR concluded that modification of the angling regulations for trout in those two areas was warranted. DNR's proposal was for a "catch-and-release" season (no angling method restrictions, though) in 11 Northeastern and 12 Southwestern counties in trout streams and spring ponds so as to reduce further harvest of the trout resource.

After presenting the proposal to the Council, Claggett asked for input from those present. Overall consensus from those present was rejection of the DNR's proposal in favor of an outright closure of trout angling for the rest of the season in those affected areas (except for stocked lakes and ponds that are managed as put-and-take fisheries). Most members felt that even "catch-and-release" angling would harm the already depleted resource, and that the general angling public was more than willing to see an immediate closure to save the remaining trout resource.

In addition, Claggett reported to the

Council on the situation with the newly-proposed trout angling regulations that were approved by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. The Natural Resources Board had given approval to the regs at its June meeting in Wisconsin Rapids, and, pending approval by Legislative Committees, the rules would go into effect for the 1990 inland trout angling season. Claggett thanked the Council members who supported this proposal.

Next, Legislative Counsel Judy Callens gave an overview of the Budget Bill passed by the Legislature and how certain items were of importance to T.U. She focused on the 1990 review and updating of streams for reclassification under the "Anti-degradation Rules" (NR 207), the "Stewardship" proposal (see accompanying article), decreasing Inland Trout Stamp sales, funding for continuing acid deposition studies, a \$20,000 water quality grant for the Pike River (Marinette county), and \$200,000 for revising effluent limits to discharge permits.

Other topics included reports from the Northwestern and Northeastern Regional Vice-Presidents, announcement of the second annual scientific exchange between T.U. and representatives from the U.S.S.R., and details of T.U. National's "Banquet Assurance Program". The Council also approved funding of \$1,000 for assisting in the production of a video on Lyme's Disease and funding up to \$800 to send three DNR people and a person from UW-LaCrosse to attend a trout symposium in West Yellowstone. The meeting ended with a presentation by Chuck Pils of the DNR on the status of beaver control in Wisconsin.



Larry Claggett, right, Trout Specialist for the DNR spoke at the State Council meeting in Wautoma on July 15. Dick Kraus, left, chairman of Wisconsin T.U. listens to Claggett's presentation.

Executive Council to meet Dec. 9

The Executive Committee of the Wisconsin State T.U. Council will meet on Saturday, Dec. 9, in the Turner Room of the UW-Stevens Point University Center. The meeting will start at 10 a.m. sharp. All elected officers of the State Council, regional vice-presidents, and committee

chairpersons are required to attend. The budget for the 1990 fiscal year will be readied for submission to the full Council at the winter meeting.

Anyone who cannot attend the meeting should contact Dick Kraus at 414-361-3823 to inform him of such.



National report

By Rick Penn

A brief report on the activities of the Annual Trout Unlimited meeting held Aug. 16-20 in Asheville, North Carolina will be given here.

A new five-year plan was discussed by the organization. Every chapter president should be receiving a copy of the plan, which outlines the goals that T.U. needs to reach in order to continue as an effective conservation organization. Two areas of the plan were adopted. The first was a change in T.U.'s mission, i.e., "to protect and restore our coldwater resources". The words "coldwater resource" were deleted, and the words "trout, salmon and steelhead" were inserted. I was assured that chars and graylind, as well as other coldwater fish, would be taken care of by this statement.

Second, a more important part of the document was adopted, and that dealt with partnership. To quote from the plan: "...Trout Unlimited is a unique organization that recognizes the need for effective partnership among its members, chapters, councils, regions, and the national organization to carry out its mission. The potential strength of T.U. is a fully developed 'grassroots' network of effective chapters, assisted by councils, regions, and the national organization, embracing each of the nation's coldwater recreation fisheries watersheds."

I was much pleased with this plan. It outlines, in a much clearer fashion, the responsibilities of the entire organization. It calls for an examination of T.U.'s publications, one that entails determining whether or not the publications meet the needs of the membership. It also spells out the need

for additional staff on the regional and national level. While I think some of the figures used are a bit fuzzy, I believe that this plan will truly serve the fish, the membership, and the organization as a whole. For those who would like a closer look at the plan, I can produce copies of it.

One development that really excited me at the Annual Meeting was the establishment of a Youth Education Committee. I joined this committee, and I'm pleased to report that there is a lot of energy and enthusiasm for this overlooked area. Ducks Unlimited has its "Greenwings" program, and now Trout Unlimited has its "Emergers"! I would appreciate it if chapters in Wisconsin that have held events for young people would send me a brief outline of the projects. Color glossies with circles and arrows would be a nice touch.

A few other short notes on the meeting. The Leadership Committee is working on additions to the Chapter Handbook. The Anadromous Committee is still involved in the battle against the use of drift nets in high sea commercial fishing. T.U. has a new president--Richard Mode, and a new Chairman of the Board--Steve Lundy. And, would you believe that a shrink-wrapped print of "Prairie River Solitude" fetched a silent auction bid of over \$135? Other than that, the only other important item was a controversial resolution supporting clear-cutting as a forest management tool.

For those chapters wishing to share information about youth-education with me, my address is: Rick Penn, Rt. 1 Box 267, Highbridge, WI 54846.

Editorial comment

By Mitch Bent
Editor

The official publication of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is undergoing a change. That change includes a replacement in the editorship of this publication. John Cantwell, who has served as publications chairman for five years, has turned over the reins of this job to yours truly. During his tenure, John brought about changes to the Wisconsin T.U. publication that were impressive. He established a new paper format, obtained articles from different sources, and basically produced a fine paper.

But, as with so many volunteer jobs, change is inevitable. John has taken on new and demanding assignments in his professional life that limit his involvement in T.U. Thus, you have a new editor of the official Wisconsin Trout Unlimited publication, namely me.

Those of you who are long-time T.U. members remember that I was the State Council Chairman for Wisconsin for three long years, from late October of 1983 through January of 1987. I took off some time in 1987 to recharge my batteries, and since then I have served as the Regional Vice-President for the Northeastern Region of the State Council. As my current status in life is that of a free-lance outdoor writer for a local weekly newspaper, the assumption of editorship of this newspaper was a logical progression. I look forward to serving you in this capacity.

There will be some changes made, to be sure. On a very pragmatic basis, we are going to attempt to bring in more advertising to the paper in order to make it more self-sufficient. A fine lady by the name of Mary Kunasch will be assisting us in that endeavor. Also, I am going to take a more involved role in the production of articles for the paper. With my contacts on environmental and conservation issues, I believe that I can bring to you, the reader, a wide range of subjects that will inform and enlighten you on topics pertaining to coldwater resource conservation. I am going to try to focus on some interesting persons within T.U. and the DNR for personal profiles. I am also going to establish a column on special trout waters, with stream profiles and trout fishing prospects therein.

But, most importantly, I want to maximize coverage of chapter ac-



Mitch Bent

tivities. Trout Unlimited, by its very nature, is a de-centralized organization. The chapters are where the action is. I want to zoom in on what your chapter is doing in your area of concern for the enhancement of the coldwater resources in your area. To do this, I will need cooperation from you and your chapter. When I send out requests for chapter reports, I hope that I will be getting something back from your group for publication. With 22 chapters spread around the state, I can't be everywhere or go everywhere to pick up stories. You and your chapter will have to provide me with that. There are a lot of good stories out in the boondocks about T.U. that are going unreported because the chapters aren't getting the messages out. It's time we change that, and I'm here to do so.

Read through this paper. Check the deadlines for articles. Look closely at the advertising schedule. Help us out if you can. We need your input to make this an A-1 publication. That's because YOU are the organization. YOU are Trout Unlimited. Give us a hand. Write an article. Send a "Letter To The Editor". I want your input. That's what makes a good publication. I look forward to serving you, and I hope that I hear from you. Soon!

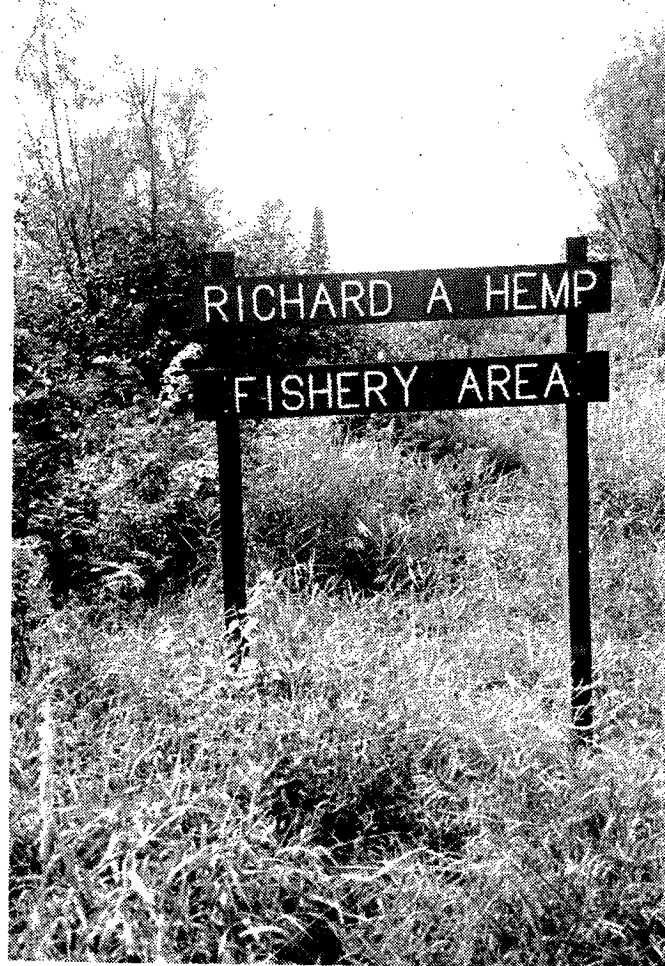
Fishery areas named after retired board members



The June meeting of the Natural Resources Board (NRB) in Wisconsin Rapids produced declarations from the Board honoring its two most-recently retired members. The NRB took steps to designate two separate trout stream sections in honor of John Lawton of Madison and Richard "Dick" Hemp (see picture) of Mosinee. Their terms on the NRB expired in May.

A section of the Tagatz Creek in Marquette County was renamed the John Lawton Fishery Area, and a stretch of the Upper Tomorrow River above Nelsonville was renamed the Richard A. Hemp Fishery Area. These streams sections were picked out for honoring these two men because of their long commitment to resource protection, and particularly land acquisition, in Wisconsin. Both Lawton and Hemp served from the late 1970's through May of 1989 on the NRB. During that period, they distinguished themselves as leaders in conservation in our state. Since both were very avid trout anglers, the new NRB deemed it appropriate that certain parts of state-owned streams that were special to them were renamed in their honor.

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is pleased by these designations, and the organization wishes both gentlemen well in their retirement years from the NRB. They served the state well on the NRB. We also note that both are members of Trout Unlimited.



Trout Unlimited member profile: Dick Kraus

When Dick Kraus walked into Arly Erickson's Fly Shop in Poy Sippi, WI., back in the spring of 1975 to buy some hooks, he didn't realize that he was going to walk away with more than he bargained for. "Arly asked me if I was a member of Trout Unlimited," Dick reminisced. "I told him that I wasn't. He suggested that it would be a good idea if I were to join." Chuckling, Dick added, "It was NOT a request; it was more like an order."

Since that day in 1975, Dick Kraus has risen through the ranks of the organization. He served as a director to the Central Wisconsin T.U. Chapter from 1983-1984, then two years as chapter Vice-President from 1984-1986. In March of 1986, Dick was elected to a two-year stint as chapter President, and he also began involvement at the State Council level with assumption of duties as State Water Resources Chairman. This past January, Dick was elected Chairman of the Wisconsin State Council, and, in that capacity, also serves as an elected director to the T.U. National Board.

Dick's interest in fishing came from his father, who instilled in him an appreciation of the outdoors. Growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, Dick's early fishing experiences were with panfish and bass. "There aren't a whole lot of trout streams near Chicago," Dick said wryly, "so my initiation to trout fishing began when my future brother-in-law invited me to go trout fishing back in the winter of 1962-1963 in Northeast Iowa. There were a lot of put-and-take streams there. After that trip, I really fell in love with the sport and decided it was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

About that time, Dick was also falling in love with his high school sweetheart, Leitha, who was to become his wife. They were married shortly after graduating from Niles Township High School in Chicago, and they moved to Wisconsin in 1966. "Leitha and I decided from the outset that we did not want our kids growing up in a city like Chicago," Dick said. "We looked around for some smaller towns, and found what we wanted in Wisconsin." The Kraus family moved to Marinette, where Dick worked for the

Ansul Company for three years. He then worked for Car Guard Company until 1971, when the firm burned down. From there, they moved to Berlin in 1971. Dick works for Realist, Inc., in the combined duties of toolroom supervisor, industrial engineer, company photographer, disposer of hazardous waste, and other responsibilities.

Dick's life isn't all work. He does enjoy his trout fishing immensely, and plies his skills frequently in the sand country trout streams of Waushara and Waupaca counties. "I try to get out at least once a week during the season," he said, "though I haven't been able to do so as much during the last few years. I also like to get up to the Wolf River for opening weekend each year with some friends, and I've been going out to Southeastern Idaho once a summer for the past couple of years with a good friend to fish waters like the Henry's Fork. And one of my bigger enjoyments recently in trout fishing has been catching steelhead on flies that I've tied."

The position that Dick currently holds in Wisconsin T.U., that of Council Chairman, is no small task, and he reflected on that during the interview. "The first several months were interesting," he said. "I was a bit overwhelmed initially, and wondered if I was up to doing the job. I soon realized that I could handle it, and have come to feel comfortable in the position. I get a good feeling of accomplishment from doing even something minor, like sending a letter to a politician on an issue." One of the first issues that Dick had to tackle was an attempt by the departing Reagan administration to put a cap on expenditures from the Wallop-Breaux Fund for sport fisheries enhancement, a move they tried in order to do some cosmetic reduction of the federal deficit. Dick said of that issue, "I sent out letters to all of our Congressional representatives and our two United States senators. I even sent a letter to President Bush." He then smiled and continued, "George was the only one who didn't reply."

The biggest issue that has come up since Dick assumed the chairmanship was the overhaul of trout fishing

regulations for the state's inland trout waters. On that, Dick said, "I have to give most of the credit for the work on that issue to Vice-Chair Steve Born and his committee, who put out the information to the chapters on it."

For the remainder of his tenure as Council Chairman, Dick has a couple of specific goals. "I'd really like to see our membership increase," he stated. "Doing a little investigating and comparison, I determined that our current T.U. membership in Wisconsin represents little more than 1% of all Inland Trout Stamp sales. I think we should be doing much better. Double it to 2% would seem a reasonable goal. I also want to help bring a better relationship between the chapters and the National organization. At my first National Board meeting this past February, I was amazed at the operation of National. I think it's a very well-run organization, and I'd like to see more understanding and appreciation by the chapters of the National Office. I'm hoping that a closer working relationship will evolve."

Dick's activity in the T.U. Organization has brought him some very memorable experiences. Remembering

the T.U. National Convention held in Oshkosh in 1982, he said, "I volunteered to help out with things going on at the Pioneer Inn, and I soon ended up helping people to register for their rooms. I did get the opportunity--a chance of a lifetime, actually--to sit down to breakfast and coffee one morning with Lefty Kreh. That was most interesting, to be sure." Also high on his list of memories is the time spent serving as Vice-President of Central Wisconsin T.U. under then-President Bob Heding, whom Dick holds in high esteem (as do many others).

Dick Kraus has definitely enjoyed his long-ago move to Wisconsin and involvement with Trout Unlimited. He says, "I feel I've got an edge on people from Wisconsin, because I came here by choice, not because I was born here. Wisconsin was always a favorite fishing area for my father, and I can see why." Then, commenting on his joining T.U., Dick grinned and said, "I joined T.U. in the hope that, by hanging around knowledgeable folks, I'd be able to improve my fishing skills. That's the only thing that hasn't worked out so far, improving my fishing skills."

Wisconsin Trout

is published four times per year by Wisconsin Trout Unlimited. Publication dates are the first weeks of January, April, July, and October. Deadlines for articles and ads for those dates are the 15th of December, March, June, and September, respectively. Contributions are welcomed and encouraged. Submit articles and non-returnable photo prints to the editor for consideration.

Mitch Bent - Editor

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WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL OFFICERS

Richard Kraus - Chairman; Steve Born - Vice Chairman;
Len Cedarholm - Secretary; Ann Dirkman - Treasurer



Wisconsin Trout Unl

ALDO LEOPOLD

Two workdays were held on Saturdays in April and May on Rowan, Hinkson, and Jennings Creeks in Columbia County. The work consisted of beaver dam removal and general clean-up of the streams. The work led to the chapter contracting, under the guidance of DNR Fish Manager Tim Larsen, with area trappers to remove beaver from these streams and provide a \$10 per beaver subsidy to the trappers for each animal removed.

The chapter held its 4th annual "Fishing Day" on Sept. 16th for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters at the home of Dave and Cindi Rowe in Poynette.

ANTIGO

The Antigo Chapter is in the process of finalizing plans for some habitat improvement work on the East Branch of the Eau Claire River near the intersection of Highway 45 and County "C". The work will include four platforms to be constructed (similar to boom covers) and a handicapped access fishing site. The project will be done cooperatively with Antigo T.U., DNR, Neva Township, and the Highland Lakes Area Lions Club. The project is being delayed pending receipt of a zoning variance.

The chapter also helped build a small parking lot for anglers along the East Branch in the Town of Ackley.

BLACKHAWK

Blackhawk T.U. donated \$2,000 for materials to be used on a work project on the West Fork of the Kickapoo River near Avalanche in Vernon County. Chapter members were invited by the Coulee Region Chapter and the West Fork Rod & Gun Club to assist in the project work on Sept. 30th. Bank riprapping and boom cover installation were to be done.

The chapter is also keeping abreast of the status of rehabilitation work to be done on McKlintock Springs.

CENTRAL WISCONSIN

The chapter completed two more workdays on the West Branch of the White River near Wautoma. During the past year, 180 man-hours were put in to accomplish 4,800 feet of stream brushing, removal of 59 large trees, and replacement of a section of livestock fence. In addition, considerable work has been done on Emmons Creek and other smaller streams.

Workdays will be held October 21 and November 11 on Emmons Creek in southern Waupaca County. No workday is set in December, but some will be scheduled in January and February. Call Mark Brosseau (414-231-2231) for details.

The chapter helped three high school students attend the DNR/UW-Stevens Point Natural Resources Careers Workshop this summer. Two half-scholarships and one full scholarship were awarded.

Central Wisconsin T.U. assisted the State Council in hosting the Russian delegation of conservationists that came to Wisconsin during the last week of September. The chapter prepared meals and acted as host for the group as they toured central Wisconsin trout streams and examined stream improvement projects.

CHEQUAMEGON — No report.

COULEE REGION — No report.

FONTINALIS — No report.

FOX VALLEY

Fox Valley T.U. spent three workdays this summer improving a section of the Waupaca River just outside the city of Waupaca. The chapter installed half-log cover and, with the aid of a contractor, put large boulders and wing dams in the river. Once the work was done, a picnic on the Rose farm (near the site of the work) was put on for those doing the work, and about 40 people showed up.

The chapter helped with upgrading the fishing facilities at the Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve near Appleton. A platform for wheelchair-

bound persons was worked on, and one of the ponds was stocked with trout for the fishing pleasure of the handicapped. The chapter also installed an aerator in one of the ponds.

About ten members attended the annual Wolf River scatter-planting project on Sept. 9th.

GREEN BAY

A productive summer was spent on trout habitat projects. Two workdays were spent on Waupaca Creek (Oconto Co.) removing old half-logs and putting in new ones. The first Saturday in July saw the chapter install brush bundles on Wisconsin Creek (Florence Co.) to trap silt and sediment from the streambed. Two other workdays were put in on the North Branch of the Embarrass River (Shawano Co.) sodding existing undercut bank cover and installing rock and boulder for cover and bank stabilization. All projects were coordinated through DNR as part of Trout Stamp funded work.

The chapter funded stream brushing and brush bundle installation with a donation to the U.S. Forest Service's "Challenge Grant" program on Hill's Pond Creek (Oconto Co.). Similar work was to be done on Forbes Creek (Oconto Co.), but a legal challenge to the Forest Service's Master Plan for that section of the Nicolet Forest held the work up. At press time, it is not known whether that work was completed or not. Other projects funded by the chapter included trout movement studies on the North Branch of Beaver Creek (Marinette Co.) and an inventory of aquatic resources on coldwater tributary streams of the boundary Brule River (Forest and Florence counties).

Land acquisition was being looked at along the main Oconto River for public access to the anadromous fishery there. The chapter is also working with the DNR and U.S. Forest Service to fund projects on trout streams in the Nicolet National Forest and elsewhere.

A chapter cookout and meeting in September was held at the Brown County Reforestation Camp. It was announced at that meeting that the chapter has attained the level of "Contributing Trustee" to TU National's Living Brightwater Program for donations over \$25,000 to the program since its inception.

KIAP-TU-WISH

In June the chapter put on a casting/fishing/fly-tying clinic at the Willow River State Park (St. Croix County) in cooperation with the Lew Jewett Chapter of the Federation of Fly Fishers and the Wisconsin DNR. In August, Kiap-TU-Wish contributed \$1,000 to a \$10,000 fund designed to provide flood repair and bank stabilization to the Lower Willow River in St. Croix County. Other contributions came from the Twin Cities (MN.) T.U. Chapter, the St. Croix County Sportsmen's Alliance, and the Wisconsin DNR.

LAKESHORE

The Lakeshore chapter donated \$100 to State Council toward receipt of film credits for a video production on Lyme disease. The chapter plans future meetings with DNR Fish Manager Paul Peeters to discuss plans for stream improvement work in 1990 on the Devil's River.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Monthly chapter meetings resume on Oct. 10, and will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Dome in Marinette.

During the summer, several leads on prospective land purchases were pursued, but no deals were made. Preliminary plans for a March sport show and an April banquet have been made.

The chapter held its second annual picnic on Aug. 27. Attendees were treated to beautiful weather, plus fine cooking courtesy of Jim Bereza and Dale Lange.

HARRY NOHR

The chapter made a \$500 donation to the Blackhawk Lake Nature Center for construction of a coldwater resource display box. The sum of \$3,000 was allocated to contract out stream improvement on Rock Creek near Mineral Point, and \$800 was spent for signs to indicate chapter project sites. And, on Sept. 21st, the annual Harry Nohr Chapter trapshoot and cookout was held.

NORTHWOODS

The Northwoods Chapter put in about 60 hours and about \$1000 doing work on the North Branch of the Prairie River in Lincoln County. The chapter also spent about \$220 for waders and equipment supplied to the Wisconsin Conservation Corps crew that performed brush cutting on Noisy Creek in Oneida County.

The September meeting had as its guest speaker Mr. Ken Anderson, the UW Extension Community Agent for Forest and Vilas counties. Ken spoke on Indian treaties and the historical stages in development of this country, in particular the treaties with the Chippewa tribes starting in 1819.

OCONTO RIVER WATERSHED

The chapter reports that the fish pond project for the Oconto County Fair was a big success. T.U. got a lot of name recognition in front of the public. The chapter put in a work day in August on Dump Creek, a little-known trout stream in Oconto County. The work involved garbage and debris removal, and chapter members got to view a creek that few folks have taken advantage of.

OJIBLEAU

The chapter spent about 80 hours and \$4,000 for rock work on about 100 feet of Elk Creek in Eau Claire and Dunn counties. The bank was rapped, and then black dirt and silt were added for stabilization. Also, chapter spent about 50 hours doing similar work on Duncan Creek in Chippewa County.

SHAW-PACA

The chapter's main effort this summer was work on an experimental boom cover on Hydes Creek, where chapter has a lease. About 30 feet cover was completed during four work nights in summer.

SOUTHEASTERN WI

No report

SOUTHERN WI

No report

WILD RIVERS

No report

WISCONSIN RIVER VALLEY

The chapter spent a busy summer a variety of projects. In May, a fish outing was held in Merrill for handicapped people. During June, July and August, the chapter focused habitat work. A DNR stream improvement project on the Prairie River was funded to the tune of \$4,800. This man-hours and \$75 was put into repair of a fence on the Little Trappe River and a change in the fence to an electric one. Over 80 hours and an undetermined amount of dollars was put into riprapping and dredging Kudick Creek, and \$800 and 50 hours was

Conference focuses on (

From July 26-28, a consortium of people representing many major conservation and environmental groups met in Ann Arbor, MI., to discuss the status of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin of the United States and Canada and how to better protect these diminishing resources. Trout Unlimited was represented by Mitch Bent of DePere, WI., who currently serves as the Northeast Regional Vice-President for the Wisconsin T.U. Council.

The consortium was put together by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, an environmental organization covering the northernmost three counties of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Funding for the group was provided through a grant from the Stewart Mott Foundation. Stephen Brown of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council served as chairman of the group.

The consortium was formed to look into current policies and programs used by state, federal, and provincial governments to protect wetlands and

determine ways to improve the laws and policies so as to obtain better protection for the Great Lakes wetlands. Over the years, settlement and development have destroyed or altered vast acreages of wetlands. With those losses of wetlands, there has been a concomitant loss of wildlife (particularly waterfowl), fisheries and other associated values. Although states and the federal government have put together a patchwork of laws and regulations over the past 20 years that supposedly protect wetlands, these statutes have been ineffective in combating wetland losses.

Further, provinces like Ontario have literally no wetlands laws, as explained by Nancy Patterson, who serves as the Wetlands Specialist for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Ontario has "policies" for retarding wetland losses, but these "policies" have regulatory force in them. Southern Ontario has lost about 80% of its wetland acres to development, primarily agriculture. In northern C



A consortium of people representing conservation and environmental groups met in Ann Arbor, MI., to discuss the status of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin of the U.S. and Canada.

United Chapter reports



into erecting fencing, digging watering ponds, and obtaining easements on the Little Haymeadow Creek in Lincoln County.

The chapter is also working to line up easements on the Plover River.

WOLF RIVER

The chapter carried out its annual scatter-planting of about 16,000 brown trout on the Wolf River on Sept. 9th. Over 30 people from various chapters came to participate.

Herb Buettner reported to the chapter that trappers contracted by the Wolf River Chapter have removed all the beaver from Ninemile Creek, an important tributary to the Wolf River in Langlade County. The DNR is currently removing the abandoned dams, and it is hoped that soon the Nine-mile will be free-flowing again and will provide spawning habitat for native brook trout.

The second annual Wolf River T.U. Chapter Conservation Banquet will be held on Saturday, Oct. 14, at Buettner's Wild Wolf Inn on Hwy. 55. Cocktails start at 5 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased by contacting Herb Buettner at (715) 882-8612 or 822-8611.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL REPORT

All of the chapters in the Northeast Region had a good fund-raising season in winter and spring, and most were busy at work on various habitat improvement projects during summer (see chapter reports). One problem still nagging the Northeast Region was the continued puzzling reluctance of the DNR to accept T.U. money for habitat



improvement projects, a situation that has been persisting for nearly 10 years. In August, Regional V-P Mitch Bent met with DNR Board member Herb Behnke of Shawano (see accompanying article) to discuss this matter.

Behnke brought this topic up to our staff at the August meeting of the Natural Resources Board in Chippewa Falls, with a request to staff to rectify the problem by year's end.

The region will hold its winter meeting on Dec. 2 to elect a new vice-president and to discuss regional matters. The meeting will be at Buettner's Wild Wolf Inn south of Langlade.

at Lakes Wetlands

above the Precambrian Shield, wetlands have been basically left alone only because development has not taken place there.

In the U.S., the federal government enacted in 1972 the Clean Water Act which had as one of its codicils a part known as "Section 404". This section required that activities affecting navigable waters in the U.S., including wetlands adjacent to those navigable waters, must be permitted in order to be legally carried out. The Section 404 permits and their issuance were sources of irritation for many developers and agriculturists, and complaints about the program led to several lawsuits and legislative attempts to overturn Section 404. None of these attempts were successful, yet the 404 program is often ineffective. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues these permits, and the Corps' record on environmental issues regarding wetlands and water has been abysmal at best. Although the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has veto power over Corps' issuance of Section 404 permits, that veto has been used only a handful of times. Far too often, Corps officials view the 404 permit as merely bureaucratic red tape that must be cut in order to facilitate development rather than as a tool to aggressively protect wetlands.

Several states in the Great Lakes Basin have some wetlands laws. Michigan has taken over issuance of the 404 permits from the Corps of Engineers, as allowed by law, in the state, but their record has been little better than that of the Corps itself. A recent Michigan DNR decision to allow a 404 permit for a developer of a golf course near the Crystal River in the northwest section of the Lower Peninsula was vetoed by the EPA, with a warning that any further misapplication of 404 permits would cause revocation of the state's right to issue those permits. Lack of staff support has also been a hindrance in Michigan. Wisconsin has a "shoreland zoning" ordinance that requires protection of wetlands within 1,000 feet of lakes or ponds and 300 feet, or the floodplain,

of a stream, whichever is greater. Wetlands of five or more acres that are not within the shoreland zone are also zoned. The State of Minnesota has a law that provides tax incentives in the form of tax credits for those landowners who sign agreements to leave their wetland areas intact rather than draining or filling them.

But, as stated previously, most of these laws do not do an adequate job of protecting these important ecosystems. Thus, the Great Lakes Wetlands Policy Consortium began to focus on ways and methods of effectuating stronger wetland protection, and, in some instances, wetland restoration. The group was divided into sub-groups to focus on several different aspects of obtaining the stated goals of the consortium. These groups will be making recommendations in their various areas, and will reconvene as a full consortium in late October in Toronto, Ontario, to consolidate these recommendations. The last meeting of the consortium is planned for April or May of 1990, when the final draft of the wetlands plan will be approved by the group. After that, efforts will be made to get states and Canadian provinces to adopt the group's recommendations for increased wetland protection.

Among the groups participating in the consortium are: Center for the Great Lakes, Great Lakes United, Ducks Unlimited (Canada), National Audubon Society, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Environmental Council, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League, Freshwater Foundation, Environmental Law Institute, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Lake Michigan Federation, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, National Association of Conservation Districts, Trout Unlimited, Association of State Wetland Managers, Ohio Environmental Council, and the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute.

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Know your Natural Resource board members

The Natural Resources Board is the governing body of the Department of Natural Resources. Members of the Board are appointed to serve staggered six-year terms by the governor. They receive no salary for their position, and cannot be fired or removed from their position until their term expires unless there are mitigating circumstances involved. Board members are responsible for the hiring and firing of the DNR secretary and upper echelon staff, and the Board also sets policy for both en-

vironmental laws, and fish, wildlife, parks and forestry within the statutory framework set by the Legislature.

If you or your chapter ever have a question that cannot or has not been answered by local DNR staff, you may contact the Board members to discuss an issue. Their names and addresses are listed here:

Thomas Lawin, Chairman
Rt. 3 Box 280
Bloomer, WI 54724

Stanton "Pete" Helland
Box 410
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

Donald O'Melia
Box 797
Rhineland, WI 54501

Herb Behnke
Rt. 4 Box 68
Shawano, WI 54166

Collins Ferris
830 Charing Cross Rd.
Madison, WI 53704

Helen Jacobs
2220 E. Newberry Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53214

Neal Schneider
Box 71
Janesville, WI 53545



Fourteen Soviet Union naturalists learned more about Wisconsin Trout Unlimited on a visit to Wautoma on Sept. 28 when they toured several streams.



Trout Unlimited sponsored a visit with 14 Soviet naturalists. They came to Wautoma to observe our fish habitat and some of our conservation methods.

DNR Fish Manager profile: Ross Langhurst

Born and raised in Iowa, Ross Langhurst, Shawano Area DNR Fishery Manager, has been with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1974 with a Bachelor of Science degree in fisheries management. Langhurst began his career with the DNR working out of the Green Bay area office for two-and-a-half years, covering Kewaunee and Door counties. Much of this time was devoted to projects on Green Bay and Lake Michigan. He then spent about one year in Plymouth as a chub assessment biologist on Lake Michigan, working the lake from Manitowoc south to Racine. In the fall of 1977, Ross assumed his current position of Fish Manager with the DNR at the Shawano office.

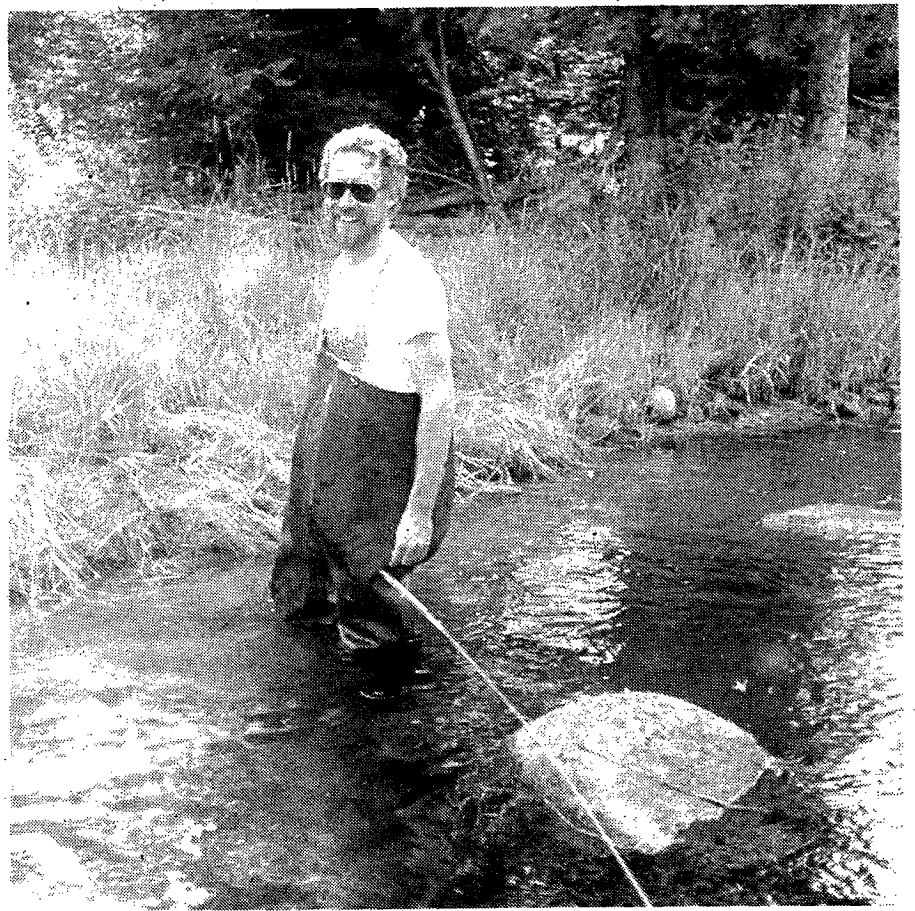
While his position requires attention to a lot of warmwater species such as bass, walleyes and panfish, Langhurst puts special emphasis on trout management. His main goal for the trout fishery in his region, which covers all of Shawano County and that part of Oconto County south of Highway 64, is the protection of what is currently there. He is quick to point out, though, special things that have been done for the trout resource in his domain. "I think the biggest thing that has occurred for the trout fishery since I've been here was the establishment of the special regulations section on the South Branch of the Oconto River in Oconto County (from County "AA" down to Highway 32). This regulation, calling for a three-fish limit, artificial-lure only, and higher size limits (10" on brook trout, 13" on browns), will be a big help in allowing the South Branch to reach its potential as a fine trout fishery. The drought of 1988-1989 has masked the influence that the regs are having, but it looks like they are already beginning to show some results. We hope to see better results in the next few years with better water conditions." Also, Ross gives credit where due in the genesis of these regulations. "Trout Unlimited played a big role in getting these regs put into place. Without T.U.'s backing, we wouldn't have gotten it through."

When assessing the rest of the trout fishery in his area, Langhurst focuses

on western Shawano County, where the bulk of his trout waters area. "The trout streams in that area start out as small seeps in swamps," he says, "and for the first few miles they are brook trout water. As the waters warm, they change into brown trout habitat. We have water temperature problems for trout in our streams simply because that's the way things are. We can't really change that." One change, though, that Langhurst has noticed since he's been in the area—a change for the better—is the decline in streamside pasturing of livestock by land-downers, which often results in degraded streambank cover. "When I first got here," he relates, "it (streamside pasturing) as a real problem. Now, it's hard to find an area where the cows are grazing alongside the bank. Simple economics made the farmers stop this practice."

Several streams in western Shawano County are seeing special habitat work done on them under Ross' guidance. The North Branch of the Embarrass River has had three areas that either have had, or are in the process of having, Trout Stamp-funded habitat improvement projects done on them. These involve mainly undercut bank cover construction and channel narrowing. On the Middle Branch of the Embarrass, Langhurst has directed some work that includes half-log placement and undercut bank covers. This fall, a spawning area for brook trout in a spring pond that is part of the Middle Branch will be dredged of silt and muck. The third major effort of Langhurst's focus is Wilson Creek, a small brook trout stream. "Here we are trying to do some low intensity, low cost work to increase brook trout numbers," he says. "Things like brush-bundling will help clean the creek out and make better trout habitat."

As with most fish managers in Northeastern Wisconsin, Langhurst stresses two major factors that are depressing trout populations—the extended drought and the overpopulation of beavers. He states, "Although there is not a big beaver population in western Shawano County, those that are there really raise hell



Ross Langhurst

with our trout streams. I'm not sure if we're going to get a statewide policy on beaver control, but we really need it. Otherwise, the individual managers are going to have to take care of things on their own areas. We need to trap 'em out, and we need incentives to get the trapping done. I'd love to see a \$100 blanket beaver price; it would be the best thing for the trout resource here."

"As far as the drought goes, it has really hurt trout, especially brook trout, in my area. In 1988, the smaller creeks were able to hold up okay. But, with the continued lack of rain up here this year, even those creeks are low and showing the impact of the lack of rain. I don't look for trout numbers to come

back for three to four years up here, even with normal precipitation levels," he says.

In his off-hours, Ross spends time with his wife, Cindy, their two daughters, and his springer spaniel. The dog, especially during fall, receives much attention. "I really enjoy my bird hunting," he says. "I enjoy other things, like trout fishing, but hunting for grouse and woodcock are my most favorite outdoor pursuits." And, how about pheasants, I asked the native Iowan. "Oh, yes," he grins, "pheasants are right near the top, too. I get back to Iowa once a year to chase those birds around. It's an absolute must."

Behnke assumes position on DNR board

With the approval of the Wisconsin State Senate, Herb Behnke of Shawano has become the newest member of the Natural Resources Board, which acts as the governing body for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Behnke was appointed by Governor Thompson to replace Richard "Dick" Hemp of Mosinee, whose term expired in May.

Most new appointees to the Natural Resources Board (NRB) need awhile to get their feet wet in their new role, but that should not take too long for

Behnke, for he has served in this capacity before. In 1967, then-Governor Warren Knowles appointed Herb to the Conservation Commission, which was the precursor to the NRB until government reorganization

under the Kellett Commission formed the DNR from the old Conservation Department, Resource Development Department, and others. Behnke then served a four-year term on the first NRB once it came into existence.

Behnke's background in conserva-

tion goes back to the early 1950's, when he served for about 12 years as a delegate to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress from Marinette County and then Shawano County. During that period, Herb began working with the likes of former state senator Reuben LaFave of Oconto and Virgil Muench and Lyle Kingston in the formation of the Northeast Wisconsin Conservation Council. The Council had several major objectives that they achieved, including establishment of the Peshtigo Harbor and Navarino State Wildlife Areas and the Fly-Fishing-Only section of the Peshtigo River on land owned by the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. Behnke also served four years on the Executive Council of the Conservation Congress before being tabbed by Governor Knowles for the Conservation Commission/Natural Resources Board position.

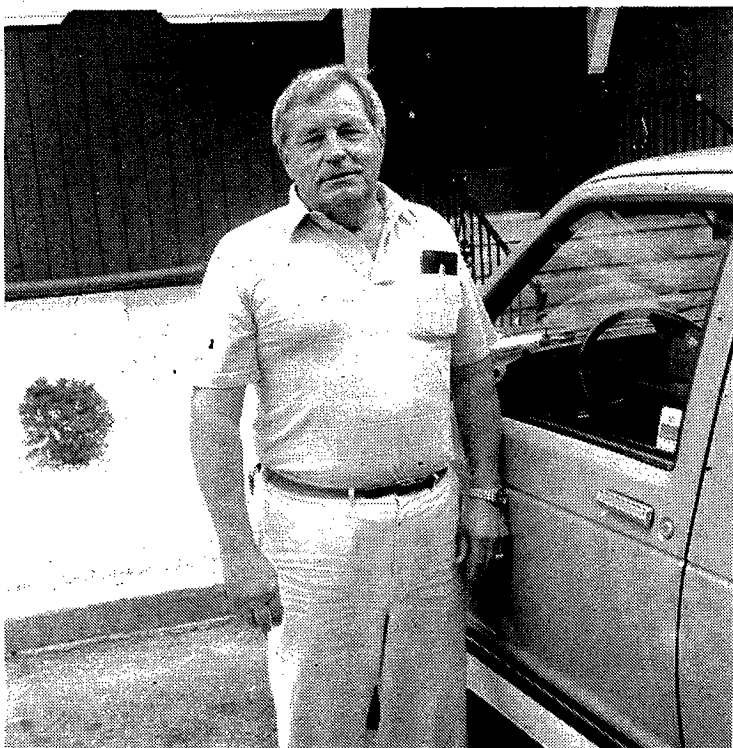
Since the end of his previous stint on the NRB, Behnke admits to having kept a low-profile in the field of conservation. He was kept busy, of course, with his duties at 21st Century Genetics, from which he just retired on July 1 after 21 years with the firm (formerly known as Badger Breeders or Midwest Breeders). He still serves part-time on a consulting basis with the firm, but is not active in the day-to-day operations.

Herb was born and raised on a farm in Lena (Marinette County) and graduated from Lena High School in 1943. With three older brothers serving in the military during World War II, it was his duty to stay at home and assist with farm operations. After the war ended, he took correspondence courses and short courses in business ad-

ministration and other areas, which prepared him for his assignments with 21st Genetics.

He has a wide range of interests in the outdoors. His hunting activities focus on deer, ducks and geese, and ruffed grouse. He makes an annual trip up to Canada for walleye fishing, and he is a member of the Spooner Musky Club, which gets together several times a year for musky fishing in northwestern Wisconsin. He says, "We are pretty much into releasing all the muskies we bring in. Last year, we let one go that went about 46 inches." While not having fished for trout in over 10 years, Herb states, "I can't say that I've really given it up. I just haven't made time for it in awhile. But that could change."

When asked what differences he has noticed between issues facing the current NRB and the one he left in 1971, Herb said, "There is an extreme difference. In the 1970's, environmental issues were just then coming to the jurisdiction of the DNR. There is much more concern today about such things as air pollution, groundwater protection, and toxins in our environment. When I was on the old Conservation Commission, our areas of interest fell primarily into the realm of hunting and fishing laws, state parks, public lands, and timber production." He further elaborated, "Some of my main concerns as a Board member will be groundwater protection and wetlands. We need to protect our groundwater supplies in order to provide safe drinking water for everyone. With that, protecting our wetlands is very important, for these are Nature's sponges that filter the water that ends up in our groundwater system."



Herb Behnke

Wisconsin Trout water profile: The White River

By Rick Penn

Beginning in the township of Delta in Bayfield County, the White River flows in an easterly direction through Bayfield and Ashland counties. It joins the Bad River near the town of Odanah in Ashland County south of U.S. Hwy. 2, and flows as part of the Bad River into Lake Superior. There are three named forks of the White River, however the most important one is the South Fork. At one time the South Fork was dammed to form three lakes which served a trout fishing resort and a brook trout hatchery. In 1961, the old Wisconsin Conservation Department (now Department of Natural Resources) obtained the resort property, which included all the land around the six spring ponds that form the South Fork. The dams were removed in 1961.

The White River is by far the largest stream in Bayfield County. The upper reaches of the river hold both brook and brown trout, although the brookies are more numerous in the spring ponds. Of the six ponds forming the headwaters of the South Fork, three have been dredged and are fishable by canoe, belly boats, or small jon boats.

The section of the White from the Delta/Drummond Road to Pike's River Road is considered to be the nursery area for this system. There are numerous riffles, with the bottom composed of gravel or small stones. The water from Pike's River Road bridge downstream to Sutherland's is prime brown trout water. The bottom is firm gravel, with few "wader snags". The river enters the Bibon Swamp east of Sutherland's, and navigation can be done practically only by canoe. The stream bottom becomes quite treacherous, because clay is the main bottom material and the river gets quite deep. From the Bibon bridge east into Ashland County, the river holds browns. Just east of the Bayfield/Ashland County line, an existing dam forms a small flowage on the river. This dam has kept lamprey from migrating up into the White, and it has an added benefit of keeping salmon and steelhead from entering the upper reaches and competing with the native brookies and browns. Downstream from the dam, the White gets runs of anadromous browns and rainbows, plus salmon runs.

The White River is famous for its hatch of big Hexagenia mayflies in June. At that time, big fish are on the prowl and can be readily caught. The White is also famous for the fact that, except during the Hex hatch, it is very stingy in yielding trout. Some folks also refer to the White as a "night fishing river". This is usually true, except when a late spring occurs. Then, the Hendrickson and March Brown hatches provide great fishing.

The White has enjoyed a special spot in many a person's heart. In 1967, a township ordinance prohibited the use of boat motors in the river from where U.S. Hwy. 63 crosses it upstream to its headwaters, all tributaries included. In the 1980's, work began to restore the channel at the headwaters of the South Fork. Instream structures were installed, and much brush was cut. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC) have improved this section of stream tremendously. An abundance of small trout can be seen by walking the river in this area, and, in fall, one can view spawners moving onto their redds. During the 1980's, too, the DNR carried out electroshocking surveys and creel censuses of the White. As a result of that work, a voluntary limit of one fish per day over 15" was suggested.

The White has several tributaries that are considered trout water. The most important of these is the Long Lake Branch of the White. This tributary may be reached by canoe from the bridge near Bibon. Brown trout predominate in that section of river draining the Bibon Swamp. Brook trout are found in its upper reaches and in Eighteen Mile and Twenty Mile Creeks, which feed into



the Long Lake Branch. Again, the bottom is firm for wading, being composed of sand, gravel, and small stones.

One of the best features of the White is its access points—there aren't many! One point is near the old resort mentioned earlier. There are roads leading into the headwaters section, but, since they were closed to vehicular traffic years ago, one must walk to get back into the ponds. The bridge on Pike's River Road provides another access point, and the state owns a large portion of frontage on the White River, thanks in part to The Nature Conservancy, which received a chunk of land as a gift from a Mr. Dixon (an ardent trout angling fan) and then transferred ownership to the state. Canoe access is available at the Sutherland bridge with only a very modest launching fee

charged by the landowner. That access point is the last one until the bridge at Bibon, which is a hard six-hour paddle from Sutherland's. The Long Lake Branch is equally inaccessible, with only a few town roads crossing it. Canoe access is to be had by putting in at Bibon and heading upstream.

The White River is considered one of the Midwest's best trout rivers. There is no "holy water" or "presidential water" here, just good, solid, high quality trout habitat that is generally undisturbed by man. A guide from Montana, who had just returned here after spending a few years in that heralded state, stated flatly to me, "This river is the equal for brown trout fishing of any stream in the West."

The new conservancy program being instituted by Trout Unlimited may

someday include private lands along the White in its program. I hope so, for the White has provided many special moments for me. It gave me my first fish on a fly, a glorious 16" brown. It gave me my first duck, a drake woodie in full plumage. It gave my wife and me quite a bit of time before our daughter was born. It is a true jewel. And, new regulations by the DNR will help enhance the White's trout carrying capacity. On the Long Lake Branch downstream from Taylor Lane and on the main White down from Sutherland's bridge, the daily creel limit will be reduced to three trout per day over 9", with only one brown trout over 15" allowed. The rest of the river will be in the Type II category, meaning five trout per day and a 7" size limit.

DNR reports on beaver-trout problems

At the summer meeting of the Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Furbearer Specialist Chuck Pils gave a report to the group on the status of the beaver control program on trout waters and other problem areas in Wisconsin. As many are aware, the high populations of beaver in the state have resulted in much damage to Wisconsin's trout waters, particularly in Northern Wisconsin, because their dams have backed up free-flowing streams causing siltation, higher water temperatures, and blockage of trout migrations for spawning purposes.

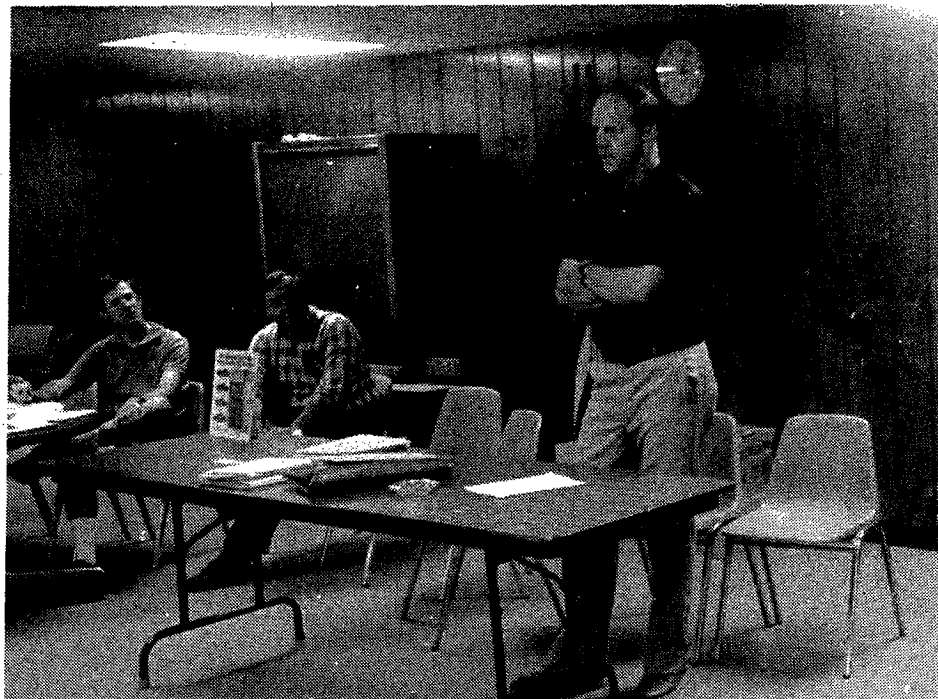
Pils began his talk with a history of the beaver in Wisconsin and its importance to the settlement of the State. After the logging-over of Wisconsin, beaver almost became extinct, but, with regeneration of second-growth forest species, particularly aspen, beaver numbers rebounded. The problems with overabundances of beaver have plagued Wisconsin on-and-off since the early 1950's, but became most pronounced in the 1970's and 1980's due to lowered beaver pelt prices that discouraged trapping.

To encourage trapping of beaver, the state began a series of steps, starting in 1982 with the elimination of the tagging requirement for beaver. In 1983 the state adopted a program of subsidizing contract trappers for harvesting beaver on Class I trout waters in Northern Wisconsin where the problems were most severe. The program was working well through 1987 when legislation was adopted to

modify the program, under the assumption that the changes would increase beaver harvest. Just the opposite occurred, and beaver populations increased to the point where stronger measures were needed to deal with the situation.

Pils then detailed some areas that required adjustment so as to provide for a more effective beaver control program. Better surveys of existing beaver populations were needed, he said, to

determine what existing population levels are and what they should be in relation to existing habitat. Opening up new markets for beaver fur were also needed so as to stimulate more trapping pressure. Other areas that needed work were: refining of harvest estimates, public attitudes on beaver problems, and new control techniques, including legalizing of snaring and removal of old beaver lodges after the beaver have vacated an area.



Chuck Pils, right, Wisconsin DNR Furbearer Specialist, gave a report at the summer meeting on the status of beaver control programs on trout waters.