

# Wisconsin Trout

April 2006

## Should Wisconsin have just one regulation for all trout waters?

By Todd Hanson

Should Wisconsin scrap its system of stream-specific trout regulations and return to a single trout regulation like the state had some 30 years ago?

Fishery managers will get a sense of the public's feelings on this concept when people vote on just such a question at the WDNR's Spring Hearings and Conservation Congress meetings across the state April 11.

The advisory trout regulation question appears on the Conservation Congress ballot. It asks whether all Wisconsin trout streams should have a three-fish daily limit of trout at least seven inches long.

WITU State Council representatives were solidly against this type of

one-size-fits-all regulation at the council's annual meeting in Wisconsin Rapids Feb. 4.

The council is encouraging TU members to attend the Spring Hearing meeting in their area to speak up in favor of the current regulatory system.

To help members do this, the council has assembled a brief outline of the many advantages of multiple stream regulations (see p. 9). In addition, a more thorough discussion of the benefits of our current trout regulations is provided by retired WDNR coldwater trout researcher Bob Hunt (see below).

The complete text of the proposed question and a list of Spring Hearing meeting locations can be found on p. 9.

## We need to keep our current, flexible trout regulations

By Bob Hunt

I was greatly disappointed to learn that a proposal will be voted on at the April Conservation Congress meetings that would drastically alter the present set of inland trout fishing regulations. This proposal, if adopted, would eliminate the nationally acclaimed best set of biologically and socially based trout fishing regulations in America.

I appeal to the trout fishers who desire this change to reconsider their belief that a radical alternative is needed. I offer just a few of many reasons not to do so. A change to a statewide implementation of a seven-inch minimum size limit — coupled with a statewide daily bag limit of three trout — is not needed.

The most fundamental purpose of a minimum size limit is protection of a majority of a population of fish until most of them have had a chance to spawn at least once. This biological reality means that a sev-

en-inch size limit is about as useful as no size limit at all for brown trout. A seven-inch minimum size limit, if adopted, would essentially provide no such protection to almost all brown trout populations throughout the southern half of Wisconsin, where growth of trout is good to excellent, and it would protect only 10% or less of brown trout inhabiting streams or spring ponds in the northern half of the state.

For wild brook trout — which usually spawn a year earlier and at a smaller size than brown trout — the proposed seven-inch size limit would also do little good in the nutrient-rich driftless regions of the state where wild brook trout populations are expanding and growth rates are exceptionally good. In the remainder of Wisconsin, a seven-inch size limit would be biologically meaningful, protecting about 50% or more of first-time spawners, but that size limit is already being used to manage most brook trout populations in this stronghold region for the species.



### IS THIS TOO COMPLICATED?

Simplification is the major reason given for an upcoming Conservation Congress question asking whether the trout regulations should be changed to a single regulation statewide. WITU opposes the change for many reasons.

Throughout the southern half of Wisconsin, a uniform seven-inch minimum size limit is also illogical because most trout fishers in this region do not keep trout less than eight inches long. For example, only five percent of trout fishers interviewed on well-known Timber Coulee Creek kept trout of that size during a season when the minimum size limit was six inches.

Diversity of choices is a popular customer option throughout American society. The amazing variety of

choices of breakfast cereals or new cars to choose from are just two common examples. Trout fishers are also increasingly interested in choosing from a variety of fishing experiences on a given fishing trip. Providing greater variety, within the more important biological constraints, was a primary goal when the present set of fishing regulations was hammered out and approved for implementation at public meetings.

*Continued on p. 9*

## In this issue...

*State Council holds annual meeting Feb. 4. . . . .p. 4*

*Council honors eight at Wisconsin Rapids . . . . .p. 6*

*Chapter president profile: Dave Patrick. . . . .p. 8*

*Report shows benefits of buffer strips. . . . .p. 8*

*Video recaps Lawrence Creek restoration work. . . p. 11*

*Hornberg Chapter creates improvement tools . . . . p. 20*

## Volunteers needed for Outdoor Education Expo May 19-20

By Bill Pielsticker

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is part of a coalition of hunting, fishing, conservation, and outdoor recreation groups sponsoring and staffing our state's first Outdoor Education Expo for youths in the 4th and 5th grades and their families.

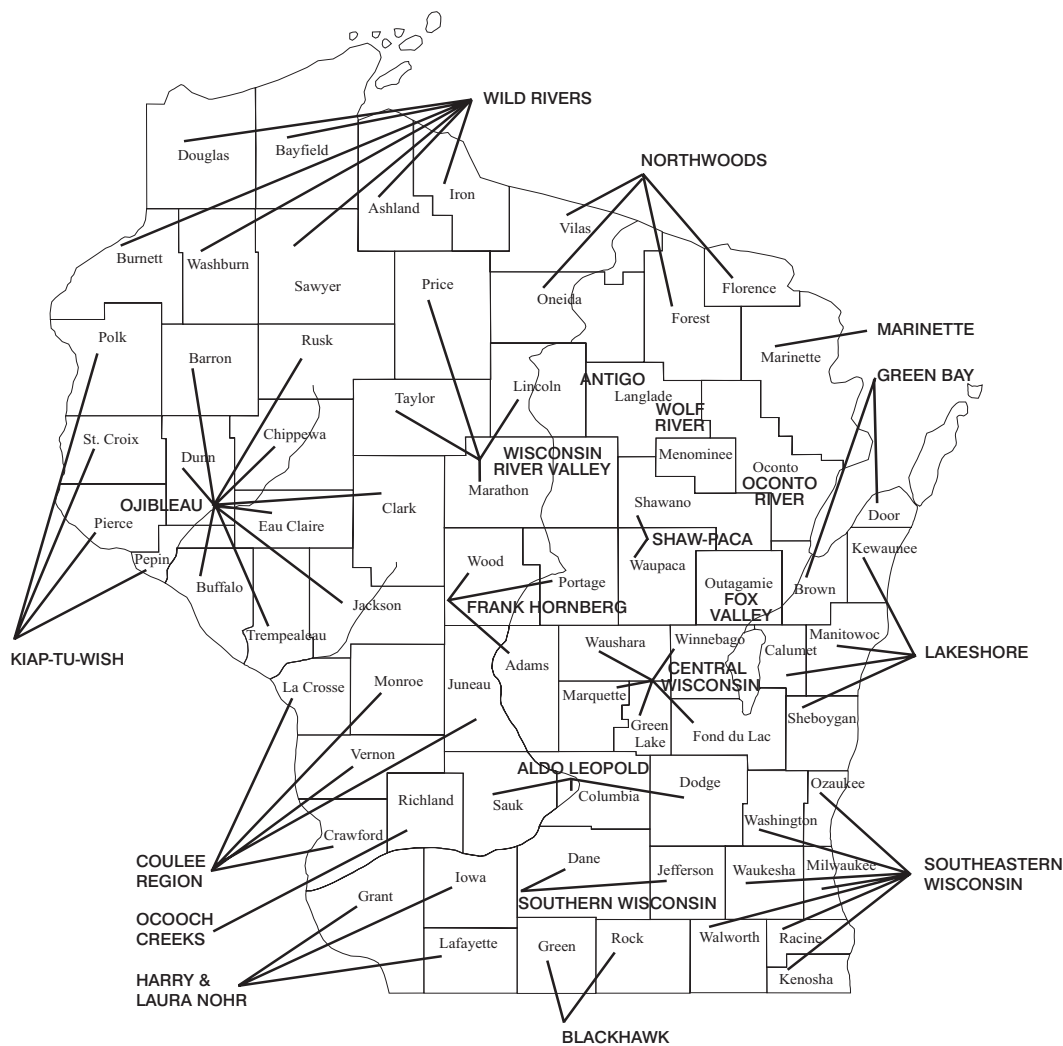
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited has volunteered to organize and staff

the fly casting and fly tying areas at the expo. As such, we are looking for up to 50 volunteers each day to serve as instructors for both of these activities.

The Expo will be held Friday and Saturday, May 19-20, at the Dodge County Fairgrounds about five miles east of Beaver Dam.

*Continued on p. 8*

# Wisconsin TU Chapters, Presidents, and Web Sites



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1. **Inform TU National.** Call, write, or e-mail TU National on your new address because only TU National keeps the membership database:  
 Trout Unlimited (703) 522-0200  
 1500 Wilson Blvd. trout@tu.org  
 Arlington, VA 22209
2. **Include your ID number and new chapter affiliation.** Your ID number is found on mailing labels attached to *TROUT* magazine. If you are moving to a different city and wish to be affiliated with the TU chapter in your area, note the new chapter number (see the text next to the map above).

### WISCONSIN TROUT

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# Of manure, archetypes, and the beckoning hand of God

By Todd Hanson

Something has struck a nerve with our readers. I have been editing this newspaper for almost seven years now, and not even during the height of Perrier's attack on the Mewan River six years ago have I received so many letters as I have the past few months. And that's no bull...or cow, chicken, or pig. Yes, it appears you are all worked up about manure.

## Editorial

Maybe you've read too many stories in this paper and elsewhere about seemingly avoidable trout kills from big manure runoff events. Maybe you're a fan of buffer strips, but are disappointed to learn that buffers are not likely to be required along Wisconsin streams any time soon. Maybe you're frustrated that the Manure Management Task Force's call for "more study and money" seems like something that was written 15 years ago by a previous task force, or the one before that.

Perhaps the heart of this frustration for our crusty trout anglers is that the solutions seem so obvious. Why not put a buffer strip in every place where it can help? Why not ban manure spreading on frozen ground on *all* farms, not just on the largest ones? Why not require every farm to produce a written plan for dealing with manure spill emergencies like we require accident plans at OSHA workplaces? And finally, the toughest question of all — why should government have to pay farmers to do what most people clearly see as the right thing to do? The answer may just be that we are all just not quite furious enough to demand these things. Maybe that's changing.

When I was in college, I got talked into taking a tiny part in a play called *Dance of Death*. (I checked the Internet for the text of my part, but I couldn't find it, making me think the play must have been a student work based on the medieval morality plays of the same name.) In that play, the character of God asked about a dozen archetypal characters about their actions on earth. Each character made a case for why he or she deserved to go to heaven, and then God offered his judgment. I played the part of the farmer, and I remember my lines had to do with my working hard, taking care of the land, and living simply. The money lender went to hell. No surprise, the farmer went to heaven.

The water stewardship spotlight is on our farmers like never before. In medieval times, farmers didn't know about soil erosion rates, excessive manure application, or soil phosphorous levels. Today they do, and one can only wonder if they will be asked how they reacted to this knowledge when their day of reckoning arrives.



## Letters

### WBI buffer approach frustrates protection

Editor,

I write in response to the January "letters" page. Mr. Hafs and Mr. Pielsticker differ widely on stream pollution protection. Mr. Hafs writes of his disappointment that the Wisconsin Buffer Initiative is si-

lent on the need for a statewide minimum buffer standard. He lists the many commonsense accomplishments of buffers. State TU Chairman Pielsticker is a member of the WBI and has reasons not to support uniform-width buffers.

### TU's Bob Selk appointed to livestock siting board

DATCP Secretary Rod Nilsestuen has appointed longtime Trout Unlimited member Bob Selk to be one of seven people who will sit on the state's new livestock siting rule review board.

The new board will review requests for new or expanded livestock operations that have been denied by local units of government.

The livestock siting law required Nilsestuen to choose nominees representing towns, counties, livestock farming, and environmental inter-

ests along with three at-large members. Board members will serve staggered, five-year terms.

Besides Selk, other nominees include **Lee Engelbrecht**, Vice-President, Wisconsin Towns Association; **Andy Johnson**, Marathon County conservationist; **Jim Holte**, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors; **Bob Topel**, Town of Portland Plan Commission; **Fran Byerly**, Jennie-O Turkey Store; and **Dr. Jerome Gaska**, Gaska Dairy Health Service.

My opinion is that [the WBI approach] confounds the goal of stream protection.... "Precision conservation"...serves to diminish existing programs (CREP), to alienate landowners, and to frustrate

conservation agencies. The CREP program and county land conservation programs make dollars available now.

Bill Hamer  
Sheboygan Falls

### Buffers only part of what WI waters need

Editor,

Are buffers a good method to improve water quality — of course! Are they the cure-all — of course not! Buffer areas should be determined by the slope of the land and will only improve the water quality of streams, rivers, and lakes. They might also help to move farm animals away from streams and rivers to improve bank stabilization and water quality. Banning phosphorus fertilizer to home owners is not a cure-all, either, but it is improving water quality.

Obviously, more *regulation* is needed to save our streams, rivers, and lakes. The addition of holding ponds is another method that should be looked at. We can determine the flow of water off of the land into watersheds and build holding ponds in areas where high runoff occurs. This would capture nutrients, sediment, and toxics, settle them out, and send the clean water on its way. Companies use this

method to allow wastes to settle and then send the clean water into the rivers and lakes.

Throwing dollars at manure management is not the way to go. How about the elimination of poor land use practices? No manure should be spread on fields unless it can be worked into the soil. If it can't be worked into the soil, then the manure should be stored either on-site, or if the land user is too small, then transported to a central holding area site, stored, and recaptured when the soil can be worked.

Why should taxpayers always have to pay for cleanup and poor land use practices? If we are going to spend money, let's look at watershed management improvement.

Trout Unlimited needs to band together as an organization and find solutions rather than fight amongst each other — we aren't the problem.

Bruce Markert  
Sun Prairie

### Farm practices more important than buffers

I would like to offer my comments and experience regarding buffers as a means of protecting our trout streams in Wisconsin. In particular, I refer issues of the letter to the editor in the January issue by Bill Hafs.

I am 83 ears old. Our family has owned our farm acreage for 155 years. A creek flows through it. I fished it since I could walk. As a kid, catching a 6-inch sucker or shiner was big stuff. I never caught a trout or heard of one being caught in that creek but for two or three miles downstream from us. Now I often catch my limit of browns and occasionally a rainbow.

What has changed in that span of years? One answer: contour strip farming! The goal of that program is to keep the water up on the hills away from and out of the creeks. Every acre on our farm is contoured and checked occasionally by GPS to make sure fields are where they should be. Other farms near are the same.

Want to know what wrecks stream banks? The worst possible damage occurs if water level in creek is high, the ice is still in place and we get a

big spring rain. Many times I have watched ice flows take out big chunks of stream bank and even re-route a stream in one day. No one seems to recognize this source of injury.

Straightening a creek and ripraps are the best help to this problem, but buffers will not. Look at buffer strip after a few years. Very soon the grass is replaced by weeds and brush which are very poor filters and, if bad enough, you can't even get a fly into the water anymore. I can't imagine that TU members don't know this.

Finally, no amount of money has ever been proposed to help a farmer maintain those buffer strips. We need 11 fences across our creek to accommodate our rotational grazing. We can take a four-inch rain, but not more. Who will come to fix the fences and keep the cows home or out of the buffer strips?

I hope TU will promote good pasture and farm management and use their money for ripraps, lunger structures, and stream crossings. And forget about buffers.

Clarence Olson  
Madison

### Vote to keep trout fishing regs the same

The annual DNR Spring Hearings and Conservation Congress Meetings are scheduled for April 11th, and there will be an important trout issue on the ballot this year. A small but influential contingent has pushed through a proposal for a rule change that would, if approved, eliminate trout population management practices based on the ecology and varied usage of individual streams, and replace them with a single, statewide trout regulation. This would be disastrous for Wisconsin trout, and a giant step backwards in progressive regulation.

The current management system has been very good for Wisconsin trout populations. Unfortunately, reasoned management is in danger of being supplanted by an emotional yearning for consistency. Clearly, the trout streams in northern Wisconsin are much different than those found in the southwest part of the state. Often due to the ragged

edges of the Driftless areas, neighboring streams can have dramatically different ecologies. To foist a consistent policy upon our biologically diverse streams is absurd. Ralph Waldo Emerson once opined that, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen". Indeed, the proposed policy would have nothing in its favor but a foolish *consistency*.

Please mark April 11 on your calendar. It is imperative that thoughtful trout anglers turn out in large numbers and show their support for scientifically sound trout management policies that consider trout biology, stream variability, varied geography and angler usage. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand current trout regulations and a little complexity is a small price to pay for a quality fishery.

Mark Maffitt  
Madison, WI

Letters continued on p. 8

Next council meeting April 29 in Waupaca

## ED fund-raising drive tops State Council actions

By Tom Hermann and Bill Pielsticker

The WITU State Council approved a proposal to begin fundraising for an Executive Director at the council's annual meeting in Wisconsin Rapids Feb. 4.

The approval vote followed a presentation and discussion of the fundraising plans and job descriptions used by other states that have hired and managed a paid staff.

The discussion revealed some concerns by several council representatives, but in the end, all agreed we should move ahead to see if we can raise up to three years of salary and expenses prior to hiring an executive director.

The Council Chair will recruit a Director's Fundraising Committee, which will be responsible for collecting pledges and donations toward the goal of raising \$250,000.

It is recognized this fundraising may take several years. In the event that the goal is not reached and an executive director is not hired, donations will be returned. Donors may also have the option to direct their contributions to the WITU Endowment Fund should the goal not be met.

The decision to raise funds to cover the first two or three years of salary and expenses follows the path taken by the Michigan State Council over a decade ago. It took them seven years to meet reach target. Since then, they have continued to raise funds for their executive director, Rich Bowman, allowing Bowman to

focus on his legislative work and assistance to chapters.

### Council bylaw changes

Another highlight of this meeting was the approval of a series of revisions to the State Council bylaws. A number of changes were approved, but only after two proposed changes were amended.

A concern was first raised over the new definition of a quorum for council meetings. There were concerns that the bar should be raised from the current "majority of those present" but not so high as to make it likely that a council meeting will lack a quorum for official business.

After discussion, the following quorum definition was approved: "A quorum for Council meetings shall be the number of those present so long as 50% of the then current active chapters are represented...."

A discussion then arose around the issue of the regions that chapters are assigned to. It was felt that existing chapters should have the ability to select the region they are part of.

After some discussion, the following language passed: "Any chapter may petition the Council for a regional membership assignment and the request may be approved by the Executive committee. New chapters shall be designated in a specific region by the Executive Committee."

### Chair's report

Chair Bill Pielsticker reported that in 2005 WITU chapters contributed a total of \$400,000 to various organizations and projects and

raised a total of \$430,000. Additionally, WITU chapters contributed about 10,000 man-hours of volunteer labor, which is equal to just over five full time DNR staff positions.

Pielsticker also reported on drought conditions and fish kills. Fish kills were fewer this past year, but the drought continues. The de-watering of the Little Plover was mentioned, and it is suspected that local irrigation is to blame. The WDNR has helped form the Friends of the Little Plover, and efforts are underway to determine the source of the de-watering.

There was another case of de-watering in Vernon County that can be directly traced to a local gravel pit's washing operation which uses a high-capacity well. The WDNR has documentation on this case. We are awaiting their report.

Pielsticker reported on WITU's involvement with the upcoming Wisconsin Youth Outdoor Expo to be held May 19-20. TU will provide fly casting and fly tying demos and instruction. We need 30-50 volunteers for these workshops (see story elsewhere in this issue).

WITU has joined with the River Alliance of Wisconsin for the "Conservation in Common" program. Under this program, the River Alliance will offer training workshops for chapter leaders.

TU National has started holding conference calls for organization leaders every two months. During the last call, a national policy suggestion that might have restricted the actions of WITU was not accepted, ensuring that the policy does not prohibit Wisconsin chapters from acting in cases involving the state's Public Trust Doctrine.

WITU has signed on to a sportsman letter to the Bush Administration in regard to Great Lakes cleanup policy. The letter notes that funding and efforts to date are inadequate.

Chair Pielsticker made note of a letter directed to the Wisconsin Manure Management Task Force regarding the need for restrictions on manure spreading. An article based on the letter was published in *Wisconsin Trout*.

### NLC notes

National Leadership Committee (NLC) representative Dan Wisniewski reports that TU's five-year strategic plan is being reviewed. Membership is stable, but donation projections need to be readjusted due to project commitments.

Technology and web site issues were discussed by National, as well as grassroots communications and relations problems.

TU National's stand on access policy was discussed. The policy has been that there would be a "bright line" between access rights and property rights. Some feel that this goes to the heart and soul of the organization. If we cannot access a stream, why are we working on improvement and restoration? Montana, Wisconsin, and some other states disagree with the "bright line" policy. Many other states do not have a public trust doctrine like Wisconsin has.

A letter from Wisniewski engendered lots of debate on the access issue. One result has been that the Appeals Committee has been restructured. We have been successful so far in regard to changing TU National's policy to allow chapters to work on access issues.

### CEI update

Pielsticker and Wisniewski led a discussion of the Chapter Effectiveness Index (CEI) chapters have been completing. A large number of chapters have been de-certified nationwide. Over 13 Wisconsin chapters have completed a CEI. These reports are not shared with TU National, but are for internal State Council and local chapter use.

It was pointed out that the CEI stems from TU National legal counsel's concern that without ensuring that chapters deliver the services TU has committed to, we could lose certification as a non-profit organization.

### Legislative activity

Jeff Smith reported on the recent Conservation Lobby Day. The event was organized by the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters (WLCV), and many WITU chapter members participated. The event was deemed to be more successful than last year's event with some 250 citizen lobbyists participating.

There was a lead lobbyist for each group, and members of the Legislature were given updates to the *WLCV Briefing Book*. Funding for non-point runoff and energy policy were discussed with individual legislators.

The Senate Select Committee on DNR regulatory reform was also discussed. This committee is headed by State Senator Alan Lasee. One result was a bill from Sen. Stepp that would impose fines on DNR staffers who are seen as being abusive or arrogant in pursuit of their duty. The consensus among membership is that this whole effort was a set-up as Lasee only asked for complaints and horror stories regarding the DNR, not positive relationships. The whole issue will be closely watched by WITU.

Tom Hermann from the Green Bay Chapter presented an idea for a candidate survey for the 2006 elections. WITU cannot endorse or contribute to political campaigns, but we can educate our members and the public. Hermann suggested we ask a series of questions that relate to our mission and print the results in the October *Wisconsin Trout*. A motion was approved to begin developing such a survey, with final approval and funding to be determined at the State Council's spring meeting.

### Buffer and manure initiatives

Chair Pielsticker noted that the final report of the Wisconsin Buffer Initiative has been printed and distributed. It now goes to the DNR for drafting of a rule. Hearings are expected within a year.

The Manure Management Task Force has also completed its work. WITU will push to have its recommendations implemented. Pielsticker urged members to follow the progress of NR 243 as the regulation works through the legislative process. NR 243 deals with nutrient rules for large animal operations, and it includes provisions to prohibit manure spreading in February and March. It is to be phased in over 4-5 years (see story on p. 11).

Pielsticker and others feel that education has been stressed too much, and that we cannot depend on that alone. There needs to be some firm incentive to stay within the rules. The phase-in period is also seen as being too long.

*Continued on p. 5*

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# Why worry about declining angler numbers?

By Bill Pielsticker

WITU State Council Chair

Next year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will release another survey that is expected to show what previous surveys have shown: despite a growing population, the number of anglers in the U.S. continues to go down. This may lead to fewer people on our streams, so who's complaining?

We all appreciate not having to jockey for a stretch of stream with "hordes" of other anglers, but that's about the only good that will come as fewer people share our sport. First, the sale of fishing licenses provides the DNR with the funds it needs to improve and protect sport fishing in Wisconsin. Similarly, sales of the inland trout stamp provide critical money for habitat improvement and maintenance on our trout streams. As angler numbers decline, those funds also decline.

Perhaps more importantly, as people pursue recreation not tied to the outdoors, they have little reason to care about how our land and water is managed. Despite our reputation as a leading conservation organization in Wisconsin, we still need allies to argue for good policies and regulations. Without new recruits, that could become even more difficult than it already is.

Speaking of regulations, there are some who feel that the state's

"complicated" regulations are responsible for declining angler numbers. Data from the DNR contradicts this claim, and survey numbers from the Fish and Wildlife Service show that the trend isn't limited to Wisconsin. What can we do?

Ask yourself, how did you become an angler? Was it a parent or a relative who included you on their vacations or day trips? Was it someone at work? Chances are, you didn't just decide to buy a rod and bait/lures/fly, ask a clerk how it all works, and head for the water. (OK, that may have happened following the movie *A River Runs Through It*, but most of those recruits were short-lived.) Instead, someone introduced you to fishing, worked with you on technique, and showed you some fishing spots. Later, that same person or someone else led you to consider the needs of the fish, their habitat and water quality needs, and you began thinking like a conservationist.

If, like me, you're of an age to remember the introduction of color TV, you'll recall that what passed then for entertainment was pretty thin. You could go to a movie, read a book, watch TV (when allowed), go swimming, and, if fortunate, go hunting or fishing. All that has changed. A family trip to a water park does not develop ties with the outdoors, nor do video games and computers. There are plenty of al-

ternatives to outdoor recreation, and anyone who hasn't been introduced to it is unlikely to know what they are missing.

The solution? In the eloquent words of Duke Welter, former State Council Chair, "Take a newby fishing." Even better, take them several times and introduce them to others who share our sport. Better yet, help them catch some fish (something I failed to do the two times my wife tried our sport). There is little better to drive enthusiasm than success.

On a broader front, Wisconsin TU is teaming up with other hunting, fishing, and conservation organizations to sponsor and staff the first Wisconsin Outdoors Education Expo to be held May 19-20 at the Dodge County Fairgrounds. The Expo is aimed at 4th and 5th graders, and is designed to spark interest in hunting and angling as well as awareness of the conservation needs of fish and game. As part of the Expo's fishing camp, TU volunteers will help visitors learn how to cast a fly rod and tie a fly.

Schools are already registering to bring whole classes to the Expo on Friday, May 19. Teachers have been given a curriculum guide that details how each activity meets particular goals established by the Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction. The DPI and the DNR are actively supporting the Expo. Families are invited to attend on Saturday, May 20.



Bill Pielsticker

Our goal in the Expo is to break through the clutter of TV and computers and spark an interest in outdoor recreation and the environment in youths at an age when it can still make a difference. Couple this exposure with a parent or relative willing to follow up with some real-world experience, and we may have a new tool for recruiting anglers for a lifetime of fishing and conservation.

Volunteers are needed for the TU's Expo casting and fly tying instruction. If you can help on either day, contact me or your chapter president. Now get out and find a newby to take fishing!

## COUNCIL: meets in Rapids

Continued from p. 4

Spring hearing trout regulation question

The Spring Hearings of the Conservation Congress will have an item that asks attendees whether they favor a single statewide trout regulation. This was widely viewed as foolish, and Pielsticker and others urged members to attend the meeting to speak against the measure (see lead story in this issue).

Bob Hunt video

Meeting attendees were shown Bob Hunt's new stream restoration video. Chapters were also given one copy of the video for local showing. The video outlines the pioneering work done on Lawrence Creek over several decades (see story elsewhere in this issue).

TUDARE

Members were given an update on TU National's Driftless Area Recovery Effort (TUDARE). In the past year a report has been issued calling for action from volunteers and fundraising efforts. There will be a partners meeting for the purpose of finding ways to ramp up restoration efforts in the driftless area that encompasses four states.

Fundraising efforts have produced \$192,000 in the last two years. Senator Herb Kohl has been instrumental in helping to secure some federal dollars for the effort.

TUDARE is working in cooperation with the departments of natural resources in the four states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois.

A training sessions on restoration work will be held in Westby March 25-26, and the workshops are already nearly full. TUDARE will also be discussed at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo in Minneapolis March 31-April 2.

River Alliance assistance

Dianna Toledo of the River Alliance of Wisconsin reported on their

Local Group Assistance Network. The River Alliance works with local groups involved in watershed work and provides leadership training and capacity-building workshops. It was noted that this is a good source for assistance for chapters that need to improve their capacity or expand their leadership circles.

Upcoming conferences will be held March 31-April 1 and April 28-29. The workshops will be geared to training a new generation of leaders and focus on building organizations, networks, and fundraising. The River Alliance will also come to individual TU chapters to offer help if asked.

Brian Hegge of the Northwoods Chapter will be the WITU representative to the Northern Rivers Advisory Team of the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

A motion by Larry Meicher was introduced and passed to authorize the WITU Executive Committee to provide up to \$3,000 in financial assistance to chapters for capacity-building and board training in the next year. The assistance can be used to supplement chapter resources to obtain the training, offset registration fees, or pay for in-state travel.

Regional reports

John Bethke of the Southwestern Region reports that Richard Kite is now interim Coulee Chapter President.

Jim Hlaban of the Central Region reports that a petition has been sent to the DNR to establish minimum flow levels for the Waupaca River. Letters of support should be sent to Scott Kinke of the DNR.

Hlaban reports continued support for water monitoring and training programs. Hlaban is representing WITU in working with Bob Martini, the DNR's river coordinator, on developing an association for streams that is more landowner based and similar to the

Wisconsin Association Lakes. He is looking for suggestions as to how to proceed.

Kim McCarthy, new Northeast Region chair, noted some of the ongoing issues in the Northeast Region such as the ongoing study of the Wolf River being done by Dave Seibl of the DNR. The Polar Springs water bottling operation is still an issue. Apparently there is a pipeline planned for the Polar Springs company. Midwest Environmental Advocates is looking into this, but it appears there is little we can do based on the DNR permit the company was issued.

Larry Meicher said the Southern Region has discussed a reimbursement policy for regional vice chairs. It is generally felt that the chair put in a lot of work and time as volunteers, but that some reasonable amount of money to pay for travel is warranted.

Membership

Jack Bode reported that relations and contact with TU National have improved. As of August 2005 our membership was 12% above that of the previous year. If trends continue, we should top 5,000 members in 2006.

Bode noted that there is a new mailing address for membership applications, and he handed out some new membership brochures. Membership applications are also available for downloading at [www.TU.org](http://www.TU.org). There are several new programs from TU National including mass mailings and an Orvis catalog offer. There is a new life membership program with various gifts for \$1,000.

National is also exploring multiple chapter memberships for members who spend considerable time in other chapter areas.

Pine-Popple update

Duke Andrews reported on progress involving the Pine/Popple/Pike Rivers and watershed. Has been working with Bob Martini of the DNR on whether these rivers'

designation as "wild rivers" will or should prevent TU from doing restoration work on them. These rivers were greatly changed during the logging period, so the idea that they are in their natural state is questionable. There has been work on a change in the regulations that would allow such restoration work, but it is a long process. Duke anticipates a final decision on the process to come in the near future.

There will be a birthday celebration for the Wild Rivers legislation soon, and Duke thought it would be a good for TU to be there.

Publications report

Todd Hanson noted that a new printer has been secured for *Wisconsin Trout*. Hanson is working on a "greatest hits" edition of the paper for new member recruitment purposes. He asked members for ideas and submissions. Hanson's annual "Big Brookie" homebrewed beer awards for stories and photo submissions were distributed.

State Council elections

Nominations for council officers were taken. In each instance, just one name was put forward. Chair Bill Pielsticker, Vice Chair Jim Hlaban, Secretary Larry Meicher, and Treasurer Jeff Ware were each re-elected.

Funding requests

Midwest Environmental Advocates requested \$5,000 from WITU to be used for their impact litigation fund. A sum of \$1,000 was approved for this purpose.

UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources requested a donation for their annual program. Action was postponed for further review.

Next meeting April 29

The next meeting of the State Council will be Saturday, April 29, at TJ Martins Public House near Riverview Park in Waupaca. The meeting will run from 10-4 p.m.



Todd Hanson

**WITU HONOREE CLASS OF 2006**

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited presented eight awards to individuals, chapters, and organizations at the State Council's annual awards dinner Feb. 4 in Wisconsin Rapids. Honorees included (l to r) Dan Holland, the Ocooch Chapter of TU

represented by Allon Bostwick, Don Pluemmer, Ed Culhane, Herb Behnke, the River Alliance of Wisconsin represented by Diana Toledo, the Lakeshore Chapter represented by Wayne Trupke, and Larry Kriese.

# TU honors eight at Wisconsin Rapids event

By Larry Meicher  
WITU Awards Chair

Eight coldwater conservation and resource awards were presented in conjunction with the State Council's annual banquet in Wisconsin Rapids Feb. 4.



**Herb Behnke — TU Resource Award of Merit**

Herb Behnke isn't as well known as Aldo Leopold or Sigurd Olsen, but in his 80 years he's made a mountainous contribution to the welfare of our state's natural resources and their related issues, often very quietly and always on volunteered time. He's been a tireless servant to the state as a repre-

sentative for Marinette and Shawano counties on the Sportsman's Congress, and over 20 years on the Natural Resources Board.

He was first appointed to what was then the Conservation Commission board by Governor Warren Knowles in 1967. He served until 1972. He was reappointed by Governor Tommy Thompson in 1989, and has been continually reappointed every since until he announced his retirement this year. He was chair of the board from 1993 to 1997.

During his tenure, the NRB has handled many challenging and important issues, and Herb has always displayed a keen understanding of the issues and problems.

Likewise, from our perspective, Herb has always been supportive of volunteer groups concerned with natural resources, like TU. Once after our council chair appeared before the board on an issue, he said, "These guys spend their Saturdays out working to improve our streams when they could be out fishing for trout, and I like that."

Mr. Behnke respects the process of listening to representative groups like ours to help reach good NRB decisions. This often means being in

a thankless, difficult position. Two good examples of this were the debates surrounding the trout stamp and the early season. Herb has always served us well, and he has always been dedicated to our precious resources.



**Larry Kriese — Gold Trout Award**

This year's gold trout goes to Larry Kriese of Green Bay. Larry retired in 2000 after 32 years in state law enforcement — seven years as a state patrolman and 25 years as a conservation warden. He displayed a sincere dedication to our coldwater resources during his tenure, and we cited him for that in 2002.

But Larry's dedication didn't end there. After his retirement, he became actively involved in the Green Bay Chapter as a member of their annual banquet committee. He even did live television promotions that highlighted the work of TU and created awareness of TU's presence.

In addition to all this, he served as the State Councils regional vice chair for the northeast region this past five years. In this leadership role, he attended numerous hearings throughout the state to represent TU, defending, protecting, and enhancing our coldwater resources. He's effectively energized the northeast region consisting of the Northwoods, Green Bay, Marinette County, Antigo, Shaw-Paca, and Wolf River chapters. Through his efforts, they have become a strong voice and have strong participation by all the chapters, including several joint chapter work days. At their last regional meeting they committed over \$44,000 toward upcoming work projects on behalf of TU.

Larry's leadership has had a great influence in leading to these

successes. When it would have been easy to just retire and not stay involved, he jumped right back in and committed to protecting and improving our coldwater resources. Larry is stepping down from the vice chair job, mainly because he recognizes that new leaders bring fresh ideas and vigor. Larry has been a tremendous asset to TU.



**Lakeshore Chapter — Silver Trout Award**

This year we're giving two silver trout awards for chapter merit. The first goes to the Lakeshore Chapter. They have been involved in a nine-year project on the Onion River in Sheboygan County that encompasses over three miles of stream improvements, and the entire stream now has public access.

The project started on a small scale, but the chapter soon realized that before any of their efforts could be truly meaningful, several ponds that warmed the river had to be drained. They encouraged a private individual who was sympathetic to restoration to step forward and purchase the former Silver Springs Trout Farm property on the Onion's headwaters. His purchase allowed them to drain the ponds and restore the original channel. The land immediately adjacent to the river was then deeded over to the WDNR.

In the meantime, the DNR acquired the other headwaters property, the Kamrath property, which allowed Lakeshore to drain a very large pond and restore the original channel there.

With these two purchases accomplished, Lakeshore TU began restoring the river the naturally reproducing trout stream it was prior to the 1940s. Over the next seven years, nearly 10,000 feet of river has been restored and enhanced.



**NEW NORTHWEST REGION VICE CHAIR**

Larry Kriese (left) enjoyed the exhibits at the State Council banquet Feb. 4 with longtime TU member Kim McCarthy, who is succeeding Kriese as Vice Chair of WITU's northwest region.

This feat involved re-routing a portion of the stream that ran through a badly polluting cow yard, acquiring easements, engaging landowners in extensive nonpoint source pollution abatement plans, forming partnerships with the Helen Shaw Chapter of the FFF, DNR, the Sheboygan County Land & Water Conservation Dept., TU National, Windway Capital Corp., Glacierland Resource Conservation and Development, USDA, WSDA, and the Trout and Salmon Foundation.

Between 2003 and 2004 Lakeshore members expended over 2,300 more hours of work building 112 lunker structures and stream improvements on over 6,000 feet of stream. In 2005 they expended 942 more hours, and they improved an additional 5,000 feet of river.

Over the nine years the chapter was involved in working with the private individual I mentioned earlier, some \$2,200,000 was expended on the acquisition of the Silver Springs Trout Farm. Then they brought together all of the partners involved to raise an additional \$210,000 to finance and bring the project to completion.

Today the Onion River is again a pristine resource that provides an excellent trout fishery as well as a habitat for birds, insects, crustaceans, and a host of other organisms. The system is so healthy and productive that in October 2005 The Aldo Leopold Foundation awarded the Lakeshore Chapter their John Nolen Award for Excellence in Ecological Restoration Practices.

The State Council is proud of the Lakeshore Chapter and their accomplishments.



Ocooch Creeks Chapter — Silver Trout Award

We decided to give a second Silver Trout Award this year to recognize our newest and smallest chapter, the Ocooch Creeks Chapter. Formed in April of 2002, and with only 33 members and no funds, they pulled off an outstanding restoration project on over 14 square miles of watershed along Elk Creek.

Elk Creek in Richland County drains into the Kickapoo River system. Elk Creek has the potential to support native brook trout due to many large springs on its degraded headwaters. The stream also had an existing, but struggling, population of brook, rainbow, and tiger trout.

With such a small membership, and as a new chapter with no funds, it was necessary for the Ocooch Chapter to form a coalition of environmental organizations to accomplish their goals, which encompassed stream restoration, research to understand and continue restoration techniques required to maintain a brook trout population, and education to promote the coldwater resources in Richland County. The chapter successfully brought together landowners, the WDNR, the Richland and Vernon County Land Conservation departments, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, TU Embrace-a-Stream, the Friends of Wisconsin Trout, the UW-La Crosse River Studies Center, UW Richland Center, Kickapoo

and Richland Center high schools, The Prairie Enthusiasts, The National Wild Turkey Federation, and Pheasants Forever.

Having very limited financial resources, the chapter held a calendar raffle during 2005 and was very successful, so successful that they returned some of the funds that Friends of Wisconsin Trout granted to them! They raised a total of \$13,000 to finance the project this past year, and the chapter expended over 1,000 hours on the project. Their work encompassed brush and tree removal, stream deepening, building two research sites, and installing lunker structures and riprap. If you get a chance to visit the area and project, do it — you'll be impressed! Stream restoration is scheduled to be finished up this spring and summer.

At the same time cooperating landowners are doing restoration projects on other properties. Research and educational activities have started and will be ongoing. An extensive prairie restoration effort on riparian areas will be started this spring.

The State Council is proud of the Ocooch Creeks Chapter and its leadership on this project. This is a fine example of what a small but determined group can accomplish when they put their will to it.

Already the chapter is taking on another large project — cleaning up the devastation on Camp Creek caused by last summer's tornadoes.



Don Pluemer — Gold Net Award

This year we present the Gold Net Award to Don Pluemer of Montfort. Don has served the Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter as VP and President, and he is currently on their board of directors.

Don has been very active on the Nohr Chapter's conservation projects. In 2002 he contributed a lot of time toward a restoration project on McPherson Creek in Grant county. In 2003 and 2004 he was leader of a brushing project on the Blue River downstream from Bluff Road. He organized the work days and returned to the site on his own time to treat the stumps. In 2003 he played an important role in the restoration on the Big Spring Branch of the Blue River.

In addition to attending all the work days, he sprayed for weeds and he was heavily involved in the planting of riparian ground cover. He also monitored the stream for dissolved oxygen, temperature, and turbidity levels, and he conducted several trout red censuses.

In 2003 he took charge of a half mile restoration on the Blue owned by the Walenec family upstream from County I. In 2004 he took charge of restoration work on a ¾ mile stretch upstream of the Walenec property on the Zoha family farm. Don applied for permits, arranged for contractors, procured materials, organized several chapter work days, and oversaw the building and placing of 60 lunker structures. He spent many hours at the job site taking him away from operating his own auto repair busi-

ness in Montfort. This is one of the most successful projects the Nohr Chapter has ever done.

Currently Don is making plans for restoration work on a section of the Blue below Bluff Road. He's working with landowners the county Land Conservation Department, NRCS, and the DNR to get necessary permits and funding. Once again, he'll lead the project.

Don also helps raise a lot of money for projects. He's been a regular on the chapter's banquet committee, organizing and acting as chief ticket seller of several special raffles. He's also met with several other chapters to solicit additional funding from them. He's been active in grant writing that has been very successful. Finally, he's been one of the key players in the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter's annual Spring Creek Festival that this year raised over \$10,000.



Dan Holland — Most Unsung Valuable Trout Award

About six years ago our annual State Council banquet was about to go "spenwing," so to speak. It was just too much to expect our council chair to carry out his duties and also be a banquet chair, too, and no one else expressed willingness to take on the task. Then Dan Holland of Stevens Point stepped forward to be our solicitor general.

Since then Dan has taken care of the setup, getting raffle items, obtaining auction items, enlisting enthusiastic ticket sellers, and keeping everyone organized before and during the event. In a nutshell, because of Dan's skills and efforts, our annual banquet is alive, healthy, and profitable. And yet while doing all this, Dan still finds time to work hard for the Hornberg Chapter where he leads many projects and educational efforts, including their work on the Tomorrow River. He's also been a great ambassador for TU in central Wisconsin.



Ed Culhane — Conservation Journalist of the Year

This year we're recognizing Ed Culhane of Appleton as Conservation Journalist of the Year. Ed is a staff writer for the Appleton *Post Crescent*, a daily newspaper serving the five-county area around the Fox River Valley. His articles often appear in other daily publications across the state. Ed writes a column about natural resources, and he pays special attention to trout-related issues.

When Ed writes, he's not afraid to tell it like it is or to take a stand on an issue. Over the last year, one

of his more noteworthy articles dealt with Bill Murphy's passing and his bittersweet legacy to the Conservation Congress where, in the end, he failed the sportsmen of Wisconsin. He has also written about the tradeoffs involved in rebuilding the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery. Regarding shoreland zoning, he wrote about resistance to zoning benefits as well as the misinformation and propaganda spread by the Wisconsin Realtors' Association under the guise of the Wisconsin Homeowners Alliance.

But Ed's starring article, as far as we're concerned, was one in August titled *Boo-ers and Boo-Birds*. He wrote a rather scathing piece about the conduct of people who attended the Fox Valley public hearing about NR-115, the shoreland protection bill, and the proposed pier regulations. Many who were in attendance displayed very rude behavior in their treatment of public officials. Ed's underlying message was that everybody deserves dignity and respect, regardless of which side of they are on, and they need to be cordial to the DNR officials who are just trying to do their job.

Ed also deserves credit for being one of the group of reporters who brought the Perrier scheme to export the waters that form the Mekan River. Ed stayed on top of this issue with his writings, and kept it in the public eye until its conclusion.



River Alliance of Wisconsin — Reel Partners Award

This year we are presenting the River Alliance of Wisconsin with our Reel Partners Award. The River Alliance is the only statewide conservation organization devoted to protecting all Wisconsin rivers and streams. The alliance, which is supported by many of the TU chapters in the state, has been a champion for healthy rivers since its inception more than a dozen years ago.

The River Alliance has been a leader in dam removal, water quality protection (especially regarding polluted runoff rules), groundwater protection, and wild and scenic river designation. They have been the initiators and advocates for Wisconsin's River Protection Grant Program, which has benefited many TU chapters. They have partnered with TU to bring dam removal as a river restoration tool to national prominence, and have worked closely with TU in many coldwater dam removal efforts.

They also worked closely with TU in the battle to protect the Mekan River from Perrier's proposed extraction scheme at the headwaters of this special trout stream.

The River Alliance's primary activity has been building a statewide network of river advocacy groups and citizen leaders. Their local assistance activities focus on capacity building and the training of volunteer leaders, and these programs have benefited many of our TU chapters and leaders. In short, the River Alliance has been the perfect partner for Trout Unlimited in our shared efforts to be stewards of Wisconsin's rivers and streams.

# Study links stream health to buffer numbers, widths

By Todd Hanson

A recently released study entitled "Buffer Width and Continuity for Preserving Stream Health" has shown a positive correlation between the presence of streamside buffers and the health of a stream's insect and trout population.

The report was published as part of the WDNR's Research and Management Findings series in response to a request by the Wisconsin Legislature.

When the Legislature was rewriting the state's nonpoint source pollution control standards in 2002, debate arose about the minimum width and continuity of buffers in order for them to protect stream health. Legislators asked for more information on the subject.

In response to this request, report authors Brian Weigel, Edward Emmons, Jana Stewart, and Roger

Bannerman began studying these relationships.

Weigel is a research scientist in the Wisconsin DNR's Science Information Services Section.

Emmons serves as DNR's Chief of Fisheries and Aquatic Habitat Research.

Stewart is a geographer with the U.S. Geological Survey.

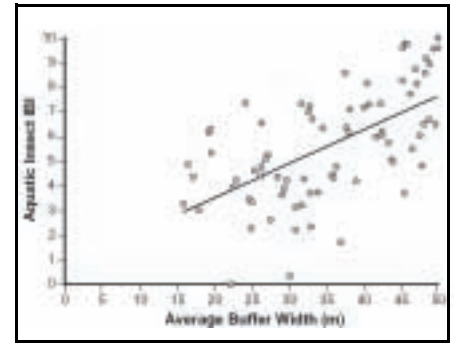
Bannerman works as a water resources management specialist with the Wisconsin DNR's Runoff Management Section.

The report cites the following conclusion:

*"This study demonstrated that both width and continuity of undisturbed buffer strips were related positively to stream health. Even streams within highly agricultural landscapes retained healthy ecosystem function if they had a wide buffer maintained for most of their length. We found the following values of buffer dimensions and characteristics consistently asso-*

*ciated with stream health as indicated by aquatic insect IBI, aquatic insect species richness, fish IBI, and trout presence.*

*"Optimal buffer performance appeared consistent with these thresholds in dimensions and characteristics. In addition, our analyses suggested that stream health and buffer characteristics were linearly related, meaning that narrow buffers having some fragmentation had modest effects on curbing agricultural stress, whereas wide buffers without fragmentation had substantial effects."*



The report is available on-line at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/publications/order.htm>.



Continued from p. 3

## Thanks John Cantwell for 'Friends' work

The Northwoods Chapter of Trout Unlimited would like to extend our thanks to John Cantwell for all of his efforts organizing and growing the Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited program.

The Friends program has provided the Northwoods Chapter a means of meeting our commitments to the WDNR for their efforts on the Brule and Elvov creeks. Without this program, the Northwoods Chapter would not have been able to make the level of commitment to funding projects in the north woods that it has over the past few years. We congratulate and ap-

plaud John on all of his efforts to make this a fantastic program for the State Chapters.

And finally, thanks to the State Council for again approving the Northwoods request last month for funding on the Brule Creek.

Brian Hegge  
Northwoods Chapter Pres.

*(John Cantwell has found a successor for the Friends program in Aldo Leopold Treasurer Steve Hill. Steve and John will be co-chairing the Friends program for a period of time before Steve takes over completely later this year. -Ed.)*

## Student program could use fishing mentors

I teach Project Green Teen where we team fly fishing with science ecology at Malcolm Shabazz Alternative High School in Madison. We have had great support statewide from TU members. Thanks everyone for your efforts.

I'd like to inform you of this years Avalanche dates should any of you again like to guide/mentor a teen on the water. This year students will be in Avalanche May 14-19. Mentors arrive around 4 p.m. each evening and finish around 7:30 p.m. Dinner is cooked and served by the students, and guides are welcome to stay. If you think you would like to mentor during this week, please e-mail me at [tmurray@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:tmurray@madison.k12.wi.us) with your name and intended dates. This is not a commitment, but allows us to plan meals and know how many guides we will have each evening for the 20 students in the class.

Thanks also for your donations of old gear to help outfit the students like fly boxes, gently used vests, old waders, wading boots, etc. Fly donations should go to John Gribb, [jgribb@mhtc.net](mailto:jgribb@mhtc.net) (608) 437-5260) of the Southern WI Chapter.

Old gear can also be mailed to me at 1601 N. Sherman Ave., Madison, WI 53704.

A few folks donated fishing licenses for the students who couldn't afford them. If you would like to do this, please send a check to the same address with "license" in the memo section. We gladly accept other donations to help us get on the stream, fish, and complete restoration. We need to raise \$8,000 each year to make this semester of instruction and trip happen for these 20 students.

Last year we built 15 lunkers and installed one in-stream structure. New this year is fly tying. We are in need of all things to tie flies — it is so new, we don't even know what we need. Donations appreciated.

TU members made this class extraordinary last year! We hope to make it even more spectacular this year. Thank you for all your support. As last year, we will have an open house at Shabazz in early June, date to be announced. Everyone is welcome!

Tina Murray, Robert Banks & Shabazz Students  
Madison, WI



## LETTING THE SUN SHINE IN

Recent tree cutting along Black Earth Creek west of Madison took place next to Festge Park about one-third of a mile upstream to east of Scherbel Road and two-thirds mile downstream west of Scherbel Road, toward the Village of Black Earth.

## Trees removed along section of Black Earth Creek

The Department of Natural Resources recently cleared "undesirable woody vegetation" from a section of Black Earth Creek between Cross Plains and Black Earth "to make the stream bank more aesthetic and accessible to anglers and less vulnerable to soil erosion."

Local resident, biologist, and trout fishing enthusiast Dennis Franke has been asking the agency to clear the vegetation from the stream for several years. According to Franke, the vegetation in effect has been "killing" the stream by restricting life-giving sunlight, thus reducing oxygen levels in the water.

The agency, in conjunction with the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department, is removing invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, and willow, along with box elder, from stream banks in the area of Festge Park and Salmo Pond.

The mechanical brushing includes using excavators and bulldozers and this has prompted curious citizens to call the DNR and Dane County wondering "what the heck is going on at Black Earth Creek," noted Kurt Welke, DNR fisheries biologist based at the agency's

South Central Region Headquarters, Fitchburg.

"The vegetative cover in this area along Black Earth Creek is so thick that it makes stream access near impossible," said Welke.

"More importantly," he continued, the dense canopy of woody vegetation shades the stream bank and prevents the growth of grasses and other beneficial, non-woody under-

*"The vegetative cover in this area along Black Earth Creek is so thick that it makes stream access near impossible. More importantly, the dense canopy of woody vegetation shades the stream bank and prevents the growth of grasses and other beneficial, non-woody understory plants."*

der story plants "making (the stream bank) vulnerable to soil erosion."

"Nothing can be more devastating to trout waters than unchecked soil erosion because it transforms streams into shallow

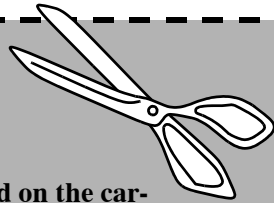
and wide water bodies' rather narrow and quick streams which provide substrate oxygen at levels vital for trout survival," explained the biologist.

After the woody canopy has been removed, mulch will be applied to the stream bank to help further soil stabilization until a beneficial non-woody under story can establish itself next spring.

*(This story and picture originally appeared in the Black Earth News-Sickle-Arrow and is reprinted with permission. -Ed.)*



## CLIP AND TAKE TO YOUR CONGRESS MEETING



The current system of managing fishing based on the carrying capacity of stream is working. Twenty years ago, we had something similar to this proposal on the books, and there were numerous complaints about the lack of large fish. This led to the adoption of a set of stream categories and limits. These depend on a stream's capacity and fishing pressure among other things.

This system is scientifically based and is flexible, being adjusted over time as fish stocks and water conditions change. Just three years ago the DNR streamlined these regulations, and they will do so again in coming years.

A simple 7-inch minimum 3-fish limit across the state would:

- reduce the take on some streams,
- allow the harvest of fish before they have a chance to spawn,
- eliminate slot limits that provide for trophy fish where otherwise there would be few, and
- eliminate catch-and-release stream segments and the quality fishing they provide.

The current system of managing trout in different regions with different regulations has been so successful it has been used to improve bass, walleye, and musky fishing.

Contrary to some critics, when the "complex" system of trout regulations was adopted, there was NO fall-off in angler numbers.

The best way to recruit new trout anglers is to take a child, friend, or co-worker fishing several times a year, not to dismantle the very system that has led to the most improved trout fishery in the country over the last 20 years.

Finally, if you want to see continued improvement in trout stream miles, fish numbers, and fish size — and you don't want to see this same "simplification" applied to bass, walleye, and musky fishing — you should vote against this proposal. Thank you.

## TU members asked to support current trout regs at meetings

Wisconsin TU members are encouraged to attend the Spring Hearing and Conservation Congress meeting so you can support the current system of trout regulations.

To help you inform the other attendees at your meeting, you can clip and read the following summary of the benefits of the current trout regulations.

### Text of Congress Question 72:

"In 1990, trout streams were grouped into 5 categories that allowed various streams and fisheries to be managed according to their biological potential. In 2003, the regulations were reviewed and modified to reduce the category number to 4, simplify the regulations and continue to manage the streams dependant on their biological and physical capabilities.

While some anglers feel there is a need to manage trout streams on a category basis to optimize the fishery, there is concern by others that regulations are still too complicated and have driven fishers away from the sport of trout fishing. Although, not supported by scientific evidence, some individuals feel that regulations may be responsible for the drop off in youth recruitment to the trout fishing ranks.

**Question: Would you support the standardization of a statewide trout regulation that would allow for a 3 bag trout limit with a 7-inch size restriction?"**

## 2006 Spring Hearing Locations (All meetings start at 7:00 p.m.)

Adams	Adams-Friendship Middle School, Gymnasium, 420 North Main Street, Friendship
Ashland	Ashland Senior High School, Auditorium, 1900 Beaser Avenue, Ashland
Barron	Barron County Courthouse, Auditorium, 330 E. LaSalle Ave., Barron
Bayfield	Bayfield County Courthouse, 117 E 5th Street, Washburn
Brown	West High School, Auditorium, 966 Shawano Avenue, Green Bay
Buffalo	Alma High School, Auditorium, S1618 STH 35, Alma
Burnett	Siren High School, Auditorium, 24022 Fourth Avenue N, Siren
Calumet	Chilton Public High School, Auditorium, 530 West Main Street, Chilton
Chippewa	Chippewa Falls Middle School, Auditorium A, 750 Tropicana Blvd., Chippewa Falls
Clark	Greenwood High School, West Gym, 306 W. Central Ave., Greenwood
Columbia	Portage Junior High School, Gymnasium, 2505 New Pinery Road, Portage
Crawford	Prairie du Chien High School, Auditorium, 800 East Crawford Street, Prairie du Chien
Dane	Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Way, Madison
Dodge	Horicon High School, Auditorium, 841 Gray Street, Horicon
Door	Sturgeon Bay High School, Auditorium, 1230 Michigan Street, Sturgeon Bay
Douglas	Northwestern Elementary School, US HWY 2, Poplar
Dunn	Dunn County Fish & Game Club, 1900 Pine Ave., Menomonie
Eau Claire	South Middle School, Auditorium, 2115 Mitscher Ave., Eau Claire
Florence	Florence High School, Auditorium, 400 Olive Avenue, Florence
Fond du Lac	Theisen Jr. High School, Auditorium, 525 E. Pioneer Rd., Fond du Lac
Forest	Crandon High School, Auditorium, 9750 USH 8 W, Crandon
Grant	Lancaster High School, Hilary Auditorium, 806 E Elm St., Lancaster
Green	Monroe Middle School, Auditorium, 1510 13th Street, Monroe
Green Lake	Green Lake High School, Multi-Purpose Room, 612 Mill Street, Green Lake
Iowa	Dodgeville High School, Gymnasium, 912 West Chapel Street, Dodgeville
Iron	Mercer Community Center, 2448 West Margaret, Mercer
Jackson	Black River Falls Middle School, LGI Room, 1202 Pierce Street, Black River Falls
Jefferson	Jefferson County Fair Park, Activity Center, 503 N. Jackson, Jefferson
Juneau	Mauston High School, Gynasium, 800 Grayside Ave., Mauston
Kenosha	Bristol Grade School, Gym, 20121 83rd Street, Bristol
Kewaunee	Kewaunee High School, Theatre, 911 3rd Street, Kewaunee
La Crosse	Onalaska High School, Auditorium, 700 Wilson Street, Onalaska
Lafayette	Darlington High School, Auditorium, 11838 Center Hill Road, Darlington
Langlade	Antigo High School, Volm Theater, 900 10th Avenue, Antigo
Lincoln	Tomahawk Elementary School, Auditorium, 1048 E. Kings Road., Tomahawk
Manitowoc	UW-Manitowoc, Theater, 705 Viebahn Street, Manitowoc
Marathon	Wausau West High School, 1200 West Wausau Ave., Wausau
Marinette	Crivitz High School, Auditorium, 718 Hall Hay Street, Crivitz
Marquette	Montello High School, Varsity Gymnasium, 222 Forest Lane, Montello
Menominee	Menominee County Courthouse, Basement, Courthouse Lane, Keshena
Milwaukee	Bayview High School, Auditorium, 2751 South Lenox Street, Milwaukee
Monroe	Tomah High School, Gym, 901 Lincoln Ave., Tomah
Oconto	Suring High School, Cafeteria, 411 E. Algoma Street, Suring
Oneida	James Williams Junior High, Auditorium, 915 Aracia, Rhinelander
Outagamie	Riverview Middle School, Auditorium, 101 Oak Street, Kaukauna
Ozaukee	Webster Middle School, Commons, W75 N624 Wauwatosa Rd., Cedarburg
Pepin	Pepin County Government Center-Co., Board Room, 740 7th Avenue, W., Durand
Pierce	Ellsworth Senior High School, Auditorium, 323 Hillcrest, Ellsworth
Polk	Unity High School, Gymnasium, 1908 150th St./Hwy 46, Balsam Lake
Portage	Ben Franklin Jr. High School, Auditorium, 2000 Polk St., Stevens Point
Price	Phillips High School, Auditorium, 990 Flambeau Avenue, Phillips
Racine	Union Grove High School, Auditorium, 3433 S. Colony Ave., Union Grove
Richland	Richland Center High School, Auditorium, 23200 Hornet High Drive, Richland Center
Rock	Loyal Order of Moose Lodge, 2701 Rockport Road, Janesville
Rusk	Ladysmith High School, Cafeteria, 1700 Edgewood Ave., East, Ladysmith
Saint Croix	Indianhead Technical College, Cashman Auditorium, 1019 S. Knowles Ave., New Richmond
Sauk	UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, 1006 Connie Road, Room A4, Baraboo
Sawyer	Hayward High School, Auditorium, 10320 Greenwood Lane, Hayward
Shawano	Shawano Community Middle School, LG 1, 1050 S. Union Street, Shawano
Sheboygan	Sheboygan Falls High School, Auditorium, 220 Amherst Ave., Sheboygan Falls
Taylor	Taylor County Multi-Purpose Building, Intersection of Hwy 64&13, Medford
Trempealeau	Whitehall City Center, Gymnasium, 36245 Park Street, Whitehall
Vernon	Viroqua High School, Auditorium, Viroqua
Vilas	Sayner Community Center, Golf Course Road, Sayner
Walworth	Delavan/Darien High School, 150 Cummings, Delevan
Washburn	WI Ag Research Station, Conference Room, W6646 Hwy 70, Spooner
Washington	Washington County Fair Park, Exhibit Hall, 3000 Hwy PV, West Bend
Waukesha	Waukesha South High School, Auditorium, 401 E. Roberta Ave., Waukesha
Waupaca	Waupaca High School, Auditorium, E2325 King Road, Waupaca
Waushara	Waushara County Courthouse, County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Room 265, 209 S. St. Marie St., Wautoma
Winnebago	Webster Stanley Middle School, Auditorium, 915 Hazel St., Oshkosh
Wood	Pittsville High School, Auditorium, 5459 Elementary Avenue, Pittsville

## REGULATIONS: keep range of trout regs as they are now

Continued from p. 1

Both the regulations category system approved, and the modest increase in "special opportunity" waters, have achieved their intended objectives. The special opportunity waters in particular have become the most popular destinations of resident and nonresident trout fishers. Let's keep that diversity option that has proven to be so useful

It is my hope that trout fishers in Wisconsin will continue to strongly endorse the scientific foundation for applying a variety of size limit, bag limit, and occasional lure restrictions tailored to meet the wide variety of physical and biological attributes of the trout waters in our state. There's a lot of water out there to share amicably with trout

fishers of all ages and preferred fishing techniques.

Let's build on, not destroy, the regulations now in effect to assure continuation of excellent fishing that has now made Wisconsin a Midwest trout mecca.



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## Consider Proper Release

The future of trout fishing is in your hands  
Practice these CPR steps to help ensure the fish you release have their best chance of survival.



1. **Don't play fish to exhaustion.** Instead, use a landing net to bring fish under control before they're played out.
2. **Handle fish in the net.** Grasp them across the back and head for firm but gentle control. Use the net fabric as your "glove."
3. **Turn fish belly up while removing hooks.** This disorients fish momentarily for easier, quicker handling.
4. **Don't remove swallowed hooks.** Just cut the line...doing so saves two-thirds of deeply hooked trout.
5. **Don't keep fish out of the water more than 10-15 seconds.** Fragile gills are damaged after that...especially in cold weather.

## Chapter president profile

# Dave Patrick: Blackhawk's LUNKER of a president

By Judy Nugent

If you've ever fished for trout in southwest Wisconsin, then you've seen and enjoyed the work of Dave Patrick. Since 1984, Dave has been President of the Blackhawk Chapter four times, often serving for two years. During this time he has transformed the chapter and the streams of southwest Wisconsin. For proof you need look no further than the West Fork of the Kickapoo.

However, before we get to the West Fork, it is important to understand the challenges Dave faced in those early years. The Blackhawk Chapter covers Rock and Green counties, which presents two big challenges for a TU group. First, there are very few streams with public access. Second, there are very few streams at all in Rock County. As a result, it was difficult for the group to get involved in hands-on stream work.

Then in 1984 Dave got an interesting letter. It was from DNR Fisheries Supervisor for Western Wisconsin, Dave Vetrano. In the letter, Vetrano stated that he wanted stream work done on the West Fork of the Kickapoo. However, the stream was listed as a class 3 stream, so Vetrano couldn't get any funds for habitat work. Dave Patrick saw an opportunity for the chapter, and soon their board approved \$2,000 to start the work.

Most of you should be familiar with the area and probably know the success story that unfolded over the next decade. Now much of the West Fork is designated class 1 or class 2, with native reproduction of brown trout and increasing numbers of brookies spawning in the tributaries.

So how did Dave Patrick succeed with the West Fork and other projects? Part of the answer lies in how he and chapter members structure their banquet.

"It used to be that we'd have a well-know outdoor speaker at our banquet and prizes that were geared toward fishermen. The problem was that this was not attractive to people who didn't fish. Now we invite everyone to come. There is no speaker, and there are a variety of prizes from women's gifts to bikes and chainsaws. Now our banquet consists of nearly 70% couples. It isn't just a men's group."

Chapter members also took it upon themselves to invite friends and business partners, with a single member often filling a whole table. When 30 individual members each fill a whole table, the chapter has a good turnout. Dave and the chapter leaders have also kept prices down. "Banquet tickets are only \$60 a couple if you order early."

So how good are the chapter finances? "When I started we made about \$400 from the banquet. For the past 12 years we've made between \$8,000-\$11,000 each year. That's roughly \$120,000 that we've put into the streams." And Blackhawk does this consistently every year. "Our goal is to spend all of our money every year. We want to get it into the streams right away so it can start doing some good."

The Blackhawk Chapter is also creative with their spending. Working with Jeff Hastings of the Vernon Co. Soil and Water Conservation Department, Blackhawk has been able to stretch their dollars with matching federal and state grants to have maximum impact. The chapter also works closely with the West Fork Sports Club and their president, Roger Widner. Roger and DNR fisheries technicians continue to develop innovative techniques for habitat improvement, for example using more rock structures in the stream.

The chapter is now well equipped. "When I first started, it took us all morning to make three



**DAVE PATRICK WITH A NICE TROUT**

Blackhawk TU Chapter President Dave Patrick holds a nice trout from a fishing trip out west. Dave has taken the reigns at Blackhawk four times since 1984.

LUNKER structures. That afternoon we made seven more before we reached exhaustion. Now we make 50 cribs between 9 and 11:30 a.m. We've taken chapter money and bought two nail guns, two compressors, two electric drills, a generator, and next we will buy a trailer. We want to be able to transport these tools and help other TU chapters. Many chapters like the Nohr, Southern, and Ocooch are involved with great projects, and we'd like to be able to share these tools on the workdays.

All of this may sound like common practice among TU chapters today, but clearly this wasn't the case in 1984. Since Dave has been around, Blackhawk has worked on more streams than can be mentioned here, but I'm sure you'll recognize some of them — Timber Coulee, Hornby, Elk Creek, Blue River, Black Earth, and many more.

Currently Dave is on the committee for the TU Driftless Area Restoration Initiative, where he will continue to have an impact on our streams.

At the same time Dave was doing all of this, he was a social studies teacher at Edgerton Middle School. He would often tell his students, "Keep the main thing the main thing." For Dave the "main thing" has always been stream rehabilitation and wild trout. His focus — and the focus of the chapter — has held fast to this ideal. And I know I join other fishermen in thanking Dave for his hard work.

(Judy Nugent is a member of the Blackhawk Chapter. You may also have seen her on television as a segment host for Outdoor Wisconsin, which is seen Thursday nights at 8:00 and Saturday mornings at 9:00 on Wisconsin Public Television stations. -Ed.)

## EXPO: TU volunteers needed

Continued from p. 1

Activities will be organized around seven themes: archery, sporting dogs, camping, fishing, firearm safety, outdoor heritage, and a wildlife trail.

Friday will see students arriving from around the state for conserva-

tion education and hands-on experience in these areas.

Saturday will be open to families with children, and again, the focus will be to provide hands-on experience and education.

The fishing camp will include an introduction to fish, featuring a DNR fish tank exhibit containing game and non-game fish, as well as a brief lesson on aquatic invasive species.

Fly casting and bait casting instruction will be offered, along with knot tying, lure making, fly tying, and instruction on catch and release. The DNR will provide fly rods and reels, and the expo will provide hooks, chenille, and hackle for tying up to 2,000 woolly buggers.

Tying instructors are asked to bring their own vice, though we will have a few available for those who can't. The goal is to provide one-on-one instruction to youths throughout the day.

Volunteers for both days may camp overnight at the fairgrounds if they care to. If you want to volunteer for this worthy effort, contact your chapter president, Larry Meicher, or Bill Pielsticker (see contact information on p. 2). With your help, we can make this an enjoyable recruiting tool for new anglers and outdoor enthusiasts.



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## New manure handling rules for large farms go to NRB in May

By Bill Pielsticker

The Department of Natural Resources will submit revised manure handling rules for large animal operations to the Natural Resources Board for approval at the NRB's meeting in Sheboygan May 23-24.

The proposed revision to NR243 would require large animal operations — those over the equivalent of about 750 dairy cows — to do the following:

- have a minimum of six months of storage for manure no later than 2010,
- avoid spreading liquid manure during February and March, and
- avoid spreading liquid manure on fields that are snow-covered or frozen.

The proposed winter land spreading restrictions follow several winters and springs in Wisconsin that have brought numerous fish kills and other incidents of groundwater contamination due to manure spreading. Research findings in Wisconsin have pinpointed February and March as the riskiest months for manure runoff into surface waters.

Another portion of the revised rules calls for year-round land spreading restrictions near surface waters and requires all concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to apply for discharge permits from the DNR.

The rule would continue Wisconsin's practice of including *all* species of farm animals housed at a single operation for purposes of determining if the operation is a classified as a CAFO. This is called the "mixed-animal unit calculation."

Some farm groups claim the mixed-animal unit calculation puts Wisconsin livestock producers at a competitive disadvantage since the EPA and some other states count only the animal species with the largest numbers. Others note that the EPA calculation would also put operators with mixed animals at a competitive advantage over neighbors with a single animal type in their operation. Adopting the EPA calculation would remove about 15% of the 140 Wisconsin CAFOs from DNR regulation.

Besides Wisconsin, 10 other states use the mixed-animal calculation, including California.

Anyone wishing to testify on this rule should be at the NRB meeting early, as testimony likely will be allowed only at the beginning of the meeting.

The effort to revise these rules pre-dates the Manure Management Task Force that recently submitted its final report calling on the DNR and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to consider more education — and potentially more regulation — to ensure that surface-applied manure is properly handled at *all* farms. This could include requiring farmers to avoid spreading on fields at high risk of runoff or requiring other land-spreading restrictions to protect surface water and drinking water wells.

The agencies have yet to release plans for following up on the task force recommendations.

## The video that almost wasn't

By Bob Hunt

In early January 2006 the first public showing was made of a new 20-minute video, *Trout Stream Habitat Restoration — A Case History*. The video summarizes an intensive ten-year evaluation of trout habitat restoration throughout the upper mile of Lawrence Creek, which is located a few miles west of Westfield in Marquette County.

The second viewing of the video occurred Feb. 4 at Wisconsin TU's annual meeting in Wisconsin Rapids. After the showing, a free copy was given to a representative of each chapter present and Todd Hanson, editor of *Wisconsin Trout*, suggested that I write an article to inform all TU members about the video available through their chapter.

During the early stages of planning for the trout habitat restoration at Lawrence Creek, I included my desire to have a movie made of the project. I hoped that filming would be done by someone from the DNR media section in Madison, but my request was turned down.

Fortunately, a DNR colleague stationed in Oshkosh, Vernon Hacker, the area fisheries biologist, heard of my turndown and offered to assist. A 16mm movie camera was available at his office, so we went ahead with plans to film various phases of the evaluation even though our amateur efforts would be less desirable than those of a professional media technician.

At the close of the evaluation project, the filmed segments were pieced together in chronological order and used sparingly by fisheries management personnel during the early 1970s. However, for reasons I no longer remember, I was completely negligent in using the finished film. I can only speculate now that after completing my technical reports about the project, I just moved on to new assignments.

Much to my surprise, 32 years after the project was completed, I received a phone call from Lee Meyers, a DNR biologist stationed in Green Bay. He informed me that he had found a reel of film — the Lawrence Creek restoration video, which had somehow moved from its last known location at the Wautoma DNR office to a drawer in Green Bay. Lee wondered if I would help identify the people in the film and what was going on. The film lacked any narration.

I agreed to help, so the film was mailed to me. I took it to Madison to discuss adding narration with the present DNR media staff and to transpose the film to a video format. I suggested that I adlib comments while the formatting was in progress, but my recommendation was that a more polished script should be written and narrated by someone with a voice more appropriate for the task.

A few weeks later, I received a copy of the finished video, but was disappointed to find out that it was simply completed with my ad-lib comments, a couple of which were erroneous. Some progress had been made to save a visual record of the evaluation project in video format — useful at least as an internal historical account for the DNR archives — but not useful, in my opinion, for any public relations viewing.

During the summer of 2004, a good friend and TU fishing buddy traveled to Wisconsin from his home in Pennsylvania to fish with me for a week. While he was visiting, I showed the DNR video to him since he was involved in similar habitat restoration projects through his TU chapter. Despite my disappointment with the lack of a good scripted nar-

ration, Owen enthusiastically encouraged me to do something about that problem.

"Bob, you will just have to write your own script," he said. After much discussion, I finally agreed to give it a try.

Soon after beginning that task, however, I again hit a wall of procrastination. I worried about investing many hours into script writing without knowing if the quality of the DNR video was good enough for public relations use, whether I could find some professional help to produce a new narrated video, and where the money would come from to pay for the production. Tight budgets within the DNR ruled out seeking help from that source.

But once more a TU friend came to my rescue. John Gremmer, then president of the Central Wis. Chapter, informed me that a neighboring TU member of our chapter, Gary

Herlache, worked in the media office at UW-Green Bay and could probably provide an expert opinion of how much of the DNR video was usable to produce an improved copy.

So I set up an appointment to meet with Gary and his colleague, Mike Schmitt.

Our initial discussion went well. There was enough of the old film, now on video, to proceed if we could shoot some new segments at Lawrence Creek. They also liked my idea of adding some graphs and charts of technical data summarizing changes in the physical features of the restored habitat, increases in the wild brook trout population, and improvements in trout fishing as a result.

During the summer of 2005 more video segments were filmed to fit the needs of my finished script. Mike and Gary then worked impressive technological gyrations to mesh old film segments needing improvement in color quality with new video footage, some colored slides, some black and white photos, some printed sentences and captions, and the technical graphs and charts to complete the new video.

A fair question to ask about the new video is the matter of relevance. Was it worth the effort and expense to produce the new video of a project finished in 1970? I concluded that it was. The evaluation of habitat restoration in the upper mile of Lawrence Creek remains the most thorough and one of the most impressive restorations reported in the professional fisheries literature. The results of the project also provided the proof positive needed to finally convince the Wisconsin Legislature to authorize establishment of the inland trout stamp and designate that the bulk of income from stamp sales be used for more trout habitat management. Stamp sales now provide more than \$1 million annually.

From the beginning of my efforts to put together a more useful video, I wrote the script with TU members in mind as the primary audience. I hope the finished product will be beneficial to them as both an informative video about what scientific restoration of healthy habitat can accomplish and as an encouragement to them to continue supplying both money and sweat equity to carry out chapter workday projects to improve living conditions for wild trout.

I thank the Central Wisconsin and Shaw-Paca chapters, the Robert Chamberlain Foundation, and Friends of Wisconsin TU for the essential financial support necessary to produce this case history restoration video.

(Bob Hunt is a longtime friend of Wisconsin TU. He was employed for 33 years with the WDNR as the leader of the Coldwater Research Group. -Ed.)





## Chapter News



### SO THAT'S HOW YOU PALMER A WEBBY SADDLE HACKLE

Central Wisconsin TU member Rich Bolda takes a turn at the vice to show a youngster how to tie a fly at CWTU's Trout Fest. The annual event was held in February at the Fin N' Feather in Winneconne.

### Aldo Leopold Chapter

Recent chapter events of note include the election of **Eric Lorenzen** to the position of Vice-President. **Bill Brashear**, past VP, remains on the board, and I want to thank Bill for the past few years of service. Without Bill's help our chapter's rebirth literally would not have happened. For that help, I am very grateful. Eric, of course, has no idea what is in store for him. Our January meeting also saw the election of **Cody Doucette** to the board. Cody has been active in chapter events in the past, and we welcome him to the board.

Our fly tying class had 10 students, and the feedback on the class has been great. Four of the students became new members to the chapter, and the instructors report some fine flies being tied by the end of the class. We are already planning for next year.

Our February meeting featured **Jon Kort** from the Rhinelander area. Jon gave us a presentation on fishing for stillwater trout in lakes and spring ponds. Around 30 of us enjoyed a very detailed, very practical presentation on all aspects of fishing for trout in stillwater. Four

pages of notes are in my files from his talk! If you have a chance to see his presentation, do so.

**Kevin Searock** and **Mike Barniskis** took turns tying flies at the "Lodi Reads Leopold" event March 4. This is our third year there. It is a great way to introduce people, especially kids, to TU and our conservation mission. A very good day was had by all.

Planning is underway for our annual chapter picnic, to be held on May 17. The picnic is held at Habermann Park in Lodi. The event starts around 5 p.m., with food at about 6 p.m. Our picnic will once again feature area guide and certified casting instructor **Dave Barron**. Dave will be giving a casting demo and clinic. The grand prize this year is a guided day of fishing with Dave on a Southwest Wisconsin spring creek. We will also have fly tyers, raffle prizes, and the usual good company. All are welcome to attend this, our main fundraiser for the chapter.

On the subject of fund raising, I want to wish chapter Treasurer **Steve Hill** the best of luck as he embarks on a new career as director of **Friends of Wisconsin TU**. I also want to thank Steve for taking on this important responsibility, and thank **John Cantwell** for his many years of service as prior director.

Our April meeting will be a streamside tour of a future project area on **Lodi Spring Creek**. We will be walking the banks with DNR personnel and discussing what needs to be done to restore this section. We hope to begin work on this project in 2007.

Staying in the Lodi area, there is a proposal to build up to 61 houses in a development near Lodi Spring Creek near the intersection of Hwy J and Fair St. This is near **Dick Ryan's farm**, a demonstration project for rotational grazing that has shown that cows and trout can share a stream. A lot of TU and DNR time and money have gone into this project. Because of the potential negative impact such a development could have on the creek, we are watching the proposal closely. At this point I can say that local gov-

ernmental bodies are doing a very good job of protecting the stream, and I expect that they will continue to do so. The proposal is at an early

stage, and stream protection is high on the list of concerns. More as this story develops.

—Mike Barniskis

### Blackhawk Chapter

Our **Spring Banquet** has been set for April 24. The banquet will be held at **Best Events** (Kandu Industries) located at 1741 Adel St., Janesville, by the General Motors plant. The menu will be very similar to what was presented the last two years. We welcome all contributions by members and the business community. All proceeds go toward stream work on trout streams.

The fly tying classes went well this past two months and will extend another three weeks. The beginner's class was under the direction of **Bob Stevens** and was assisted by some of the members.

This coming year there are several possible projects on the following streams: **Hornby, Knapp, Brush, Weister, Elk** and the **West Fork of the Kickapoo**. We plan to contribute to these projects with time and money. In order to do this, we have to have a good turnout at our Spring Banquet April 24.

We had a white elephant gift exchange at the December meeting under the direction of **Dick Alfors**. This is an event that is a barrel of laughs. Gag gifts were in order. It gave the members an opportunity to

get rid of some tackle and gifts that they no longer want. Some of the members brought some hors d'oeuvres, cookies, and refreshments of some sort. There was a raffle for a fly rod that evening with the proceeds going into the fund balance to be used for stream work.

This past year the **Vernon County Soil and Water Conservation Commission** under the direction of **Jeff Hastings** completed work on four streams. The Blackhawk Chapter donated \$7,000 dollars to these projects for materials, plus some labor. The streams that were improved were **Otter Creek, North Fork of Bad Axe, Bishop's Branch** and **Norwegian**.

In addition to these projects, the Blackhawk Chapter contributed time and money toward stream work on the **Sugar, Burns Kent Creek, Blue River** and **Elk Creek**. We have contributed or earmarked \$6,106 toward these projects. This is made possible by the funds earned at our Spring Banquet and contributions from other interested parties and members.

—Arlan Hilgendorf

### Central Wisconsin Chapter

In March, **John Gremmer** ended his two-year term as president of the Central Wisconsin Chapter. It almost makes you tired looking back at all the things that were accomplished during that time period. We have seen a tremendous growth in membership, expansion of our workdays on streams, and the start of a stream water monitoring program.

Some of the other activities that were either started or expanded were programs at our meetings, our Fun Day (which is now called **Trout Fest**), **Master's Fly Tying Series**, **CWTU/Fox Valley Technical College Fly Tying and Fly Fishing** classes, casting clinics, and our **Trout Outing**, where experienced fly fishers take out the inexperienced. John was instrumental in the success of this through his planning, hard work, and recruitment of other members to volunteer their time and talents. It takes leadership and teamwork to have a great football team, and the same is true for a club like the Central Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Thank you, John, for all that you have done, and thank you to all the members who volunteered their time and talents for so many different activities.

Another person that needs to be recognized is **Rich Mlodzik** for his leadership and hard work in coordinating all of our workdays for the past few years. We have grown from a handful of people at a workday to sometimes as many as 30. This does not happen by itself. Members can see the hard work that Rich has put into this and how it has improved the quality of area streams. Members want to be a part of this and attend as many workdays as they can. **Jim Humphrey** has volunteered to be the new workday chairperson, and he will be assisted by workday committee members **Tracy Moran, Shawn Sullivan, Bob Rennock, Tony**

**Rennock**, and **Elward Engle**. Also serving in an advisory capacity will be **Rich Mlodzik** and **Bob Hunt**. Our workdays have become so popular and successful that we will be having some workdays during the week as well as on the weekend.

**Dick Pollock** has volunteered to chair the **Water Action Volunteer Committee**. He will be assisted by committee members **Bob Haase, John Gremmer, Bob Rennock**, and **Don MacCaulay**. A thank you goes out to **Bob Rennock** for his work in getting the program started last year. We trained 42 members to be Water Action Volunteers and take samples from area streams once a month. Thank you to all those who took part in the training and stream monitoring. We will be sponsoring another WAV training program on April 29 at **Green Lake** for those that would like to renew their skills or become a WAV volunteer. We will also begin our advanced upper level WAV training program with an organizational meeting on March 23 and at our training meeting on April 22.

**Ira Giese** will continue as membership chair. Ira helped us gain around 80 new members last year, and we have already grown by 27 members this year. One of our goals this year is to follow up with new members to make sure they feel welcome, know who to contact if they have any questions, and are aware of all the programs and activities of the chapter. Thank you, Ira, for all your hard work.

**TroutFest** was held again this year at the **Fin 'N Feather** in Winneconne, and it continues to get bigger each year. We had the largest attendance ever, and everyone who attended seemed to be pleased with the program. There were 10 mini-seminars put on by **Jeff Priess, Dave Bartz, Steve Winters, Dr. Bob Stelzer, John Gribb, Bob Hunt, Tim**



### THE BIG PICTURE

John Doucette uses a camera and projector to give Aldo Leopold fly tying class attendees a close-up view of the action.

# Chapter News



**Landwehr, Marty Kwitek, Scott Grady, and Tom Young.** Some of the best fly tyers in the state demonstrated their tying skills. There were around 70 fly tyers, biologists, rod builders, net builders, historians, authors, guides, DNR personnel, and fly shop owners present at this year's event. Twenty seven people joined CWTU during TroutFest.

One of the highlights was the youth tying program where members assist young people in tying some of their first flies. The admission to TroutFest is free in order to encourage people to attend and find out more about Trout Unlimited, trout stream ecology, fly tying, and related areas of interest. Thanks go to **Ira Giese, Bob Smaglik, and Dan Colligan** for running the greeters table; **Sue Bouck** and **Jack Wahlers** for setting up and monitoring the rummage sale; **Alan Lee** for chairing the youth tying; **Gary Herlache** and **Bob Haase** for overseeing the seminar area; and **Jim Humphrey, Dick Pollock, and Russ Bouck** for promoting chapter activities. A special thank you to the presenters, tyers, and all others that donated their time to make this event so successful.

Another highlight of this year was the completion of the **Bob Hunt** video "Trout Stream Habitat Restoration." The video is a case study of trout stream rehabilitation done on **Lawrence Creek** in central Wisconsin. The video was produced with financial help from our chapter, the **Chamberlain Foundation, Friends of Wisconsin TU, and Shaw-Paca TU.** **Gary Herlache** and **UW-Green Bay** provided the technical assistance and production for the video. Thank you **Bob Hunt** for all the work you have done in the past and that you continue to do to help us restore and maintain our trout streams. Copies of the video were distributed free of charge to all the chapters at the annual State Council meeting in Wisconsin Rapids (*see separate story in this issue*).

Thanks to webmaster **Brian Tesch**, our web site continues to help

## Fox Valley Chapter

The Fox Valley Chapter has held several meetings this winter, and the members have been planning for this year's fund raiser which will be held on March 25.

The January meeting was the annual session that we have with one of the teaching chefs and a couple of students from **Fox Valley Technical College.** This year the meeting was held in the new restaurant and kitchen facility at FVTC. The demonstrations included the fixing of seared salmon, baked flounder, bay scallops in tequila, and shrimp and papaya with mango salsa. Everyone in attendance agreed that the presentations were excellent and the recipes easy to follow. Everything was delicious and the serving trays were empty at the end of the evening. We have already scheduled the program for next January, so highlight the third Thursday of 2007 on your calendar if you would like to join us.

Our **Funnite** meeting was held on the same day as the only snow storm in February, and the attendance was down as a result of the storm. **John Nebel** had organized to have a Kids Corral fly tying area, fly tyers, the chapter library, and other presenters to help introduce TU to

us communicate with our members and others throughout the country. Check it out at [www.cwtu.org](http://www.cwtu.org).

We just completed our **Master's Tying Program** with 28 people taking part in it. This program also seems to get more popular each year. Master tyers presenting this year were **Rich Osthoff, Jack Hollowinski, John Nebel, Mike McGill, Tracy Moran, Brian Tesch, and Rich Bolda.** Those attending learned new tying techniques, new patterns, new materials, as well as some presentation techniques for the flies that they tie.

The chapter's new video projector is a real plus in helping everyone in the class see how to tie the flies. The video projector will also be a big help in the speaker's bureau that CWTU is starting. We will have PowerPoint type presentations that we can take to area groups and service clubs to help spread the word about Trout Unlimited and how people can help support our chapter. The more support we can get, the more work we can do on area trout streams. We need to thank **Bob Chamberlain** for getting this started and for his leadership work in our planning and organizational meetings.

The mission of CWTU is to preserve, protect, and enhance the cold waters in our five-county area. Without the help of so many people, we could not accomplish the work on area streams or the public awareness necessary to get public support for our projects. Members contribute in so many ways, such as volunteering to be an officer, serving on the board of directors, and chairing or participating in various committees. Members also contribute by attending the banquets, becoming a banquet sponsor, making a donation to the chapter, or by just being a member.

I apologize if I forgot to mention someone, but if I have, please be aware that we thank you and appreciate what you have done.

—*Bob Haase*

those who don't know about the organization.

A great deal of time has been spent on organizing the chapter fund raiser which is called **Cabin Fever Day.** This will be the fifth time the event has been held at **Waverly Beach** on the north shore of **Lake Winnebago.** The event will run from 9:00-4:00 on March 25 and will include bucket raffles, silent auctions, a special dice game, a canoe raffle, fly tiers, a DNR booth, suppliers, and tackle reps. **Dave Whitlock** and **Tim Landwehr** are the featured presenters this year. We will also have a special presentation by a graduate student from **Michigan Tech** who is working on a program that deals with the **coaster brook trout.**

We are also planning for our spring and summer work days, the very popular **Handicapped Fishing Day** on April 29, and working with **Jim Hlaban** and his stream monitoring program.

Enjoy the beauty of God's streams, creeks, and lakes, and, as our Prez always closes his column, "We'll see you on a trout stream."

—*Rich Erickson*



Rich Erickson

## FABULOUS FISH FOR FVTU

The Fox Valley Chapter's annual fish cooking program continues to please. Here two chefs from Fox Valley Technical College present another mouth-watering spread.

## Frank Hornberg Chapter

At the December 8 general meeting, **Ross Mueller** gave a presentation entitled "Eight Important Wisconsin Hatches." As always, it was well organized and most informative. Despite a disagreeable night, it was well attended.

On January 19 the chapter held its first **Fly Tying Workshop** at **Clancey's Stone Lion** in Custer. Again it was a murky night, but nine tyers came, as did 20 attendees. Everyone seemed to enjoy the event. Several people who had never tied before tried their hands at tying, with surprisingly good results.

A number of the Frank Hornberg faithful assisted with the running of the **State Council Banquet** in Wisconsin Rapids on Sat., Feb. 4. Their able efforts helped ensure that those attending enjoyed themselves, and contributed greatly to the financial success of the banquet.

The second and final **Fly Tying Workshop** was held Feb. 18 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at **Shooter's Supper Club** in Plover. Despite the bitterly cold weather (-20 at the beginning of the event), 10 tyers and 15 attendees made the event a big success. A special thanks to those

expert tyers present — **Jeff Dimick, Rick Foris, Gary Glennon, Jan Tuley, and Matt Ebbers** of Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

We are pleased to learn that the DNR has given us approval to do a stream enhancement project on the **Upper Tomorrow River** just downstream from **Rolling Hills Road.** Work will commence this year. Already significant numbers of Christmas trees have been collected at the future work site.

In addition, we will be sponsoring a stream work project to be conducted by **UW-Stevens Point** student **Eric Struck** on the lower section of the **Hemp Area** of the **Upper Tomorrow River.** His mandate is to repair previous stream structures and add brush matting where needed.

Finally, our chapter will represent TU at the first **Conservation Expo** to be held on Saturday, March 11, from Noon to 5:00 at the **Woodlands Church** off Hoover Road in Stevens Point. **Mark Mather** and **Dan Holland** will maintain a booth at the expo, and Dan will give a talk entitled "The Path to Stewardship."

—*Dan Holland*

## Green Bay Chapter

The Green Bay Chapter has been active over the winter planning for our **31st Annual Fund-raising Banquet.** This year's event will be held March 23 at the **Stadium View Banquet Hall** in Green Bay. It is expected to draw 400 plus people who will help us raise money to put back into our coldwater resources.

It is imperative that the chapter have a successful banquet as we have committed a large amount of dollars to habitat improvement during coming year. As usual, we are going to fund beaver trapping, fisheries technicians, and habitat improvement projects, but the dollar amounts are more than in previous years. We will also perform hands-on work in conjunction with the **DNR** and the **Forest Service.**

The chapter, with the aid of other area chapters and conservation groups, has committed to continuing trout stocking in the **Oconto Riv-**

**er** below the **Stiles Dam.** This endeavor provides a quality fishery within easy driving distance of the Green Bay area.

*Continued on p. 14*



**SEIDEL GIVES WOLF RIVER UPDATE**  
Dave Seidel of the WDNR Antigo Office gives GBTU members an update on trout research underway on the Wolf River



## Chapter News



Gary Richardson photos



### KIAP-TU-WISH DRIFTBOAT RAFFLE

Some lucky angler will soon be fishing from this beautiful 14' Greg Tatman driftboat to benefit restoration of Pine Creek in Pierce County. The boat is equipped with a Bos quick-release anchor system, a UHMW anchor bang plate, a 30lb. pyramidal anchor, bronze oarlocks, and GULL brand oars. Raffle tickets cost \$10 each and are available by mailing a check payable to "Kiap-TU-Wish TU" by May 3 to Greg Dietl, 10758 Falling Water Ln., Unit D, Woodbury, MN 55129

*Continued from p. 13*

Our monthly meetings have featured some fine programs. **Darrel Tolliver**, manufacturers rep for **Scientific Anglers** and **Reddington**, talked about trout fishing in Alaska.

**Dave Seidel** of the **Antigo DNR** office had a program about a study in progress of the **Wolf River**.

**Jon Motquin** of the **East Central Plan Commission** talked about wet-

lands, showing how the value of wetlands goes far beyond their monetary value on the real estate market.

Scheduled for the April meeting is **John "Duke" Welter**. The May meeting will have **Kevin Searock** talking about fly fishing in **Britain**.

—Gary Stoychoff

### Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

The **Blue River Restoration Project** 2006 is the third annual project on the upper reaches of the Blue River. The work will be done on the center half of the stream be-

tween **Snowbottom** and **Bluff** roads. The previous two years we restored 5,600 feet of stream above **County I** north of **Montfort**, WI. This year's work is about a mile downstream



Todd Hanson

### SOUTHERN WISCONSIN TU WELCOMES ICE BREAKER SPEAKERS

The Southern Wisconsin Chapter treated their 2006 Ice Breaker event speakers to a great meal at the Nash Williams Memorial Banquet Jan. 20. Seen here are (l to r) SWTU Vice President Jack Way, ESPN trout fishing personality Kelly Galloup, WDNr trout stream expert Mike Miller, and SWTU Chapter President Susan Fey.

from the previous work and involves 4,200 feet of stream.

The contractor has already removed the overhead cover that limits grass growth on the banks and macroinvertebrate growth in the stream.

Our annual banquet is coming up, and preparations are going well. The banquet will be May 5 at **Dodger Bowl** in Dodgeville.

We have four fish-along programs going on this summer. Members will be available to take beginners out on a stream to help them learn more about trout fishing. Anybody interested should view our web site for further information at [www.nohrtu.org](http://www.nohrtu.org).

—Brian Larson

### Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

Kiap-TU-Wish members continue to work with other conservation organizations on streamside work projects on **Gilbert Creek** in **Dunn County**. The chapter's next in-stream work project will begin in April or May on the **South Fork of the Kinnickinnic River** in **Pierce County**.

The chapter re-elected **Ted Mackmiller**, **Bob Lorenzen** and **Gary Richardson** to board positions at our annual business meeting in March.

Longtime K-TU activist **Andy Lamberson** did a spectacular job of filling in as speaker at the February meeting when the scheduled speaker was forced to cancel at the last moment. Andy presented an excellent overview of **Yellowstone National Park** from the perspectives of both an angler and a naturalist.

K-TU closes out its meeting year in May with a presentation by area fisheries biologist **Martin Engel** of the **WDNR**. The April meeting will feature fly tying demonstrations in memory of **Dry Fly Dick Frantes**.

The chapter is providing personnel to help staff a Western Wisconsin TU display at the third annual **Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo** in **Bloomington, MN**, the first weekend in April.

The chapter has nominated the **City of River Falls** for the **WDNR**

**John E. Brogan Environmental Achievement Award**. This award is presented in recognition of outstanding environmental achievement by a civic or business entity. It is the DNR's highest outside award. The chapter's nomination cited the city's progress over the last decade in developing environmental protections for the **Kinnickinnic River**, a Class I brook and brown trout stream that flows through the city. The city's achievements include:

- the creation of a 205J Stormwater Management Plan,
- participation in the Kinnickinnic Priority Watershed project,
- the creation of a Stormwater Utility to provide a funding mechanism for projects,
- the passage of a pioneering Stormwater Ordinance (perhaps the first of its kind in the Midwest),
- the passage of a Shoreland Protection Ordinance,
- creating a North Kinnickinnic Monitoring Program, and
- starting an improvement program to eliminate direct stormwater discharge to Lake George.

Additionally, the city is developing a comprehensive plan that recognizes the environmental and recreational values derived from protection of the river.

—Jonathan Jacobs

### Northwoods Chapter

**Jim Pippel** gave a presentation on bamboo rod building at the February 13 chapter meeting and enlightened all of us on the history of bamboo rods. A couple of chapter members in attendance had previously attended Jim's one-week class on rod building. Jim's rods are works of art and beautiful to cast.

The list of projects that the Northwoods Chapter will sponsor this next year were discussed and approved at our February 13 meeting. They include:

- \$1,500 to the **Forest Service** toward the \$5,500 provided by the **Northeast Region of TU** to fund technicians to remove tag alder and create brush bundles on several creeks in the **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests**;
- \$2,000 to the **Forest Service** to remove dilapidated structures on the **Deerskin River**;
- \$1,000 toward the \$7,000 provided by the **Northeast Region of TU** to the **Forest Service** to fund a trapper to remove beavers from coldwater resources in the **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests**;
- \$1,000 toward the \$6,000 provided to the **WDNR** by the **Northeast Region of TU** to fund a beaver trapper for the **Pine-Popple Wild River** system;
- \$2,000 to the **DNR** to fund habitat work on **Brule Creek**; and
- \$500 toward the \$2,000 provided to the **DNR** to fund a channel

shaping and brushing project on the **North Branch of the Prairie River** and **Kippenberg Creek**.

The chapter is sponsoring a fly tying session with **Bill Sherer** on April 8. This session is not for beginners, as the session will be focused on tying meat flies like the Double Bunny and other musky flies. Bill has promised to bring some of the new synthetic materials and show all of us how to tie these large flies so they catch fish. Pre-registration is requested so we know how many people to plan for. Call Brian at (715) 282-5706 to reserve a spot. The session will cost \$40 with all materials being supplied.

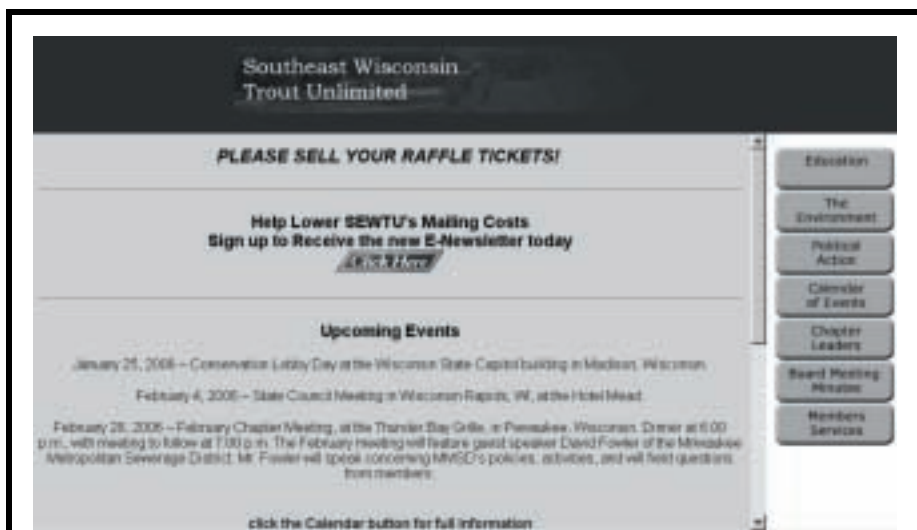
The Northwoods Chapter will hold its 32nd Annual **Conservation Banquet** on Tuesday, April 11, at the **Rhinelanders Café & Pub**. We hope you will join us in this celebration of trout conservation, a great evening of food, wonderful prizes, and general good times!

And on July 8, the chapter will hold our annual **Youth Fly Fishing Conclave** at **Kemp Research Station**.

The chapter holds our meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month at the **Claridge Inn**, Rhinelanders, at 7:00 p.m. Mark your calendars for these upcoming events.

—Brian Hegge

# Chapter News



## SEWTU starts chapter web site

The Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited has started a web site for the chapter.

The site is being maintained by SEWTU chapter member Bill Meyers.

You can access the site at [www.SEWTU.org](http://www.SEWTU.org).

Other Wisconsin TU chapter web sites are shown on p. 2 of each issue of *Wisconsin Trout* alongside the territory map.

## Ocooch Creeks Chapter

With another stream project season rapidly approaching, the chapter approved two projects that will enhance the **Willow Creek** fishery. The first of the projects concerns the **Upper Willow** and will focus on preserving a large oxbow that is jeopardized by severe erosion.

The Willow just below **Ithaca** will be the site of the second project. As in the other site, an oxbow is being threatened by erosion. In addition, stream bank restoration and habitat improvement using lunger structures will complete this project.

Additional projects for 2007 are being investigated and include clean-up and restoration on **Camp Creek** following last summer's tornado that severely damaged the riparian area.

After 30 days of temperatures above 30 degrees, it appeared that the brushing project for **Ash Creek** on Feb 18 would proceed. Unfortunately, a temperature of minus 18 deterred even the toughest of the Ocooch members while the beavers appreciated the reprieve. The project was rescheduled for April 1. Meanwhile the brushing project on **Elk Creek** that was scheduled for April 1 has been rescheduled for May 6.

On February 4 the chapter was awarded the **Silver Trout Award** for the restoration effort on **Elk Creek**. Initial survey results indicate markedly improved fish populations in the restored area. The chapter is indebted to the State Council for this honor.

—Allon Bostwick

## Shaw-Paca Chapter

Our **UW-Stevens Point** scholarship was awarded to **Rachel Koehler** of Stevens Point. She is majoring in water resources and limnology with 3.97 GPA.

We pledged \$1,000 toward beaver control in the **Nicolet National Forest**. We also voted to sponsor two high school students to the **Natural Resources Camp** sponsored by UW-SP.

Our major chapter activity this winter has been our fly tying class that is open to the public. We were snowed out for one session, thus our last night was March 9. We had a nightly turnout ranging from 10 to 20, with tyers ranging in age from 14 to somewhere in their 60s. Thanks to chapter member **Jerry Weatherwax** for leading the class.

—Lee Kersten

## Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

This past quarter has been an exceptionally busy one for the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of TU. As previously reported, the chapter has moved its meeting location to **The Thunder Bay Grille**, located just off the intersection of Hwy. 94 and Pewaukee Road, at N14 W24130 Tower Place, Waukesha.

In January, the chapter welcomed **Jason Borger** to our general meeting, which was attended by over 100 people. Mr. Borger, as many know, is a renowned writer, illustrator, and was one of the stunt casters involved in the filming of **Robert Redford's** masterpiece theatrical adaptation of **Norman Maclean's** classic **A River Runs Through It**.

In February, the chapter welcomed **David Fowler**, of the **Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage**

**District**. Mr. Fowler spoke about what the MMSD has done, is doing, and plans to do in the future in order to ensure improvement of the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area's waterways, including its coldwater ecosystems and fisheries.

On March 28 we welcomed **David Ruetz**. Mr. Ruetz gave a presentation concerning fishing Wisconsin spring creeks. The March chapter meeting also featured this year's **SEWTU Sports Show** raffle.

At April's all-chapter meeting, SEWTU welcomes **John "Duke" Welter**. Mr. Welter is one of several representatives spearheading TU National's **TU Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE)**, and he will speak to the chapter concerning the cause and what we can do

*Continued on p. 16*



Dennis Hagman photos

## Oconto River Chapter placing line recycling bins at launches

By Dennis Hagman

Each spring members of the Oconto River Watershed Chapter clean up 75-100 access points on the Oconto River. At just about every site, we pick up yards of monofilament line. This line can be a danger to fish, birds, animals, and fishermen. It takes more than a normal person's lifetime for it to disintegrate.

While traveling to Texas and Florida, I found monofilament disposal bins at beach access points. They were well marked as for their purpose. Last year our chapter experimented making and placing some of these bins in our area.

The bins are very easy to make. All that is needed is a 3- or 4-foot piece of PVC pipe, a 90-degree elbow for the top, and a cap for the bottom. The thin-wall PVC is lighter and less costly. The cost of each bin is less than \$10. A member made signs, which were laminated and glued to the bins. The cost goes up if a post has to be provided.



Five bins were placed in the City of Oconto at boat launches and fishing points. Within 24 hours, line was placed in some of the bins. Over a period of six weeks, a grocery bag of line was collected. This is line that will not be in the bushes or the river.

Not all of the line will be placed directly into the bins. Some people are just too lazy to walk a few feet to dispose of their garbage. But the bins and the signs are a reminder to properly dispose of line. They may encourage somebody to take the effort to clean up the area.

Before placing bins, you must get the permission of the entity that is responsible for the boat launch or access point. I talked with the people at city hall. They were very supportive when knowing the purpose of the bins. It is essential that somebody take the responsibility to empty the bins on a regular basis. I have seen some that had line dangling out of them and it was unsightly. It is a good idea to drill holes in the bottom cap to let the rain drain out.

The five bins placed in Oconto this fall were for a test to see if they would be used. Our chapter plans to put out more bins in the spring of 2006. Our hope is to keep as much monofilament line out of the river and off the bank as possible.



## Chapter News

Continued from p. 15

On April 1 SEWTU traveled to **Richland Center** to undertake a joint workday with the **Ocooch Creeks Chapter** at **Elk Creek**. Although blessed with many members, SEWTU finds itself surrounded with warm water and, therefore, a lack of coldwater restoration opportunities. SEWTU is hopeful that this joint workday will lead to other joint stream restoration opportunities for our members, not only in southwestern Wisconsin, but across the state. Be sure to sign up on the web site if you are interested in attending this workday.

In February, SEWTU also launched its own **web site**, which can be found on the web at [www.sewtu.org](http://www.sewtu.org). Spearheaded by chapter webmaster **W.S. "Bill" Meyers**, the

chapter's new web site is able to serve as a portal for SEWTU members to sign up for education and restoration volunteer activities, and as a conduit to inform members of upcoming chapter events.

SEWTU has also continued its e-mail initiative spearheaded by chapter president **Rich Vetrano**, and is now sending newsletters, notices, and inquiries directly to the computers of over 100 members.

As previously reported, SEWTU has continued its **political action campaign**. The chapter's political liaison, **John Knitter**, recently attended a hearing of the Wisconsin Legislature concerning the WDNR. There John asserted SEWTU's support for the DNR and its activities aimed at protecting and improving our state's coldwater habitats.

On April 10, SEWTU will turn its members out in force at Wisconsin's statewide, county-based **Conservation Congress Hearings** in order to rally against the proposed "one-size-fits-all" trout size and bag limit regulation. SEWTU strongly supports targeted regulations aimed at protecting and maximizing fish populations as needed, by body and section of water, and is strongly opposed to any regulation that would undo the work performed by our state TU chapters, the DNR, and other conservation stakeholders throughout the years.

From March 10-19, SEWTU manned a booth at the **2006 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show**. Headed by chapter sports show coordinator **John Gosz**, SEWTU maintains a booth to sell raffle

tickets in order to support our chapter and to spread the word concerning TU's mission to over **150,000 visitors**. This year's raffle's grand prize is a handmade cedar strip canoe, generously donated to the chapter by **Stan Strelka** of **Professional Insurance Services**. Others prizes include a mountain bicycle generously donated by board member **Jill Wabiszewski and family**, a shotgun package donated by the **Menomonee Falls Gander Mountain** store, a fly fishing package donated by **Laacke and Joys**, and a prize package donated by Milwaukee's **Potawatomi Bingo Casino**. As always, SEWTU thanks all of its generous sponsors for their valuable contributions to our chapter and its causes.

—Henry Koltz

# Many trout updates in 2006 fishing report

The WDNR's *2006 Wisconsin Fishing Report* includes many updates from the agency's regional fisheries personnel on trout populations and habitat projects. The following are some samples from the report.

"DNR stream surveys in 2005 found good



2005 was the second year in a row of increased trout numbers in the **Prairie River**, a trend also seen in other area trout streams. Size structure of trout in the **Prairie River** remains good, with brook trout over 15 inches and browns over 21 inches captured in our surveys."

—Dave Seibel, fisheries biologist, Antigo.

"A trout population estimate survey on the **South Branch** of the **Oconto River** suggests good trout population numbers. During 2005, baseline stream surveys were carried out at several sites on the **Lower North Branch** of the **Oconto River** watershed covering portions of **Oconto** and **Forest** counties. A total of 29 streams were electroshocked, including several trout streams. Many of the streams surveyed were facing low water levels and higher than normal water temperatures during summer, 2005, but still showed very good brook trout production because many of the streams are spring-fed."

—Justine Hasz, senior fisheries biologist, Peshtigo.

"In the **Waupaca River**, 2005 stream electrofishing surveys indicate that trout populations and size structure are improving. Young-of-the-year numbers were up 36 percent from the last survey and 46 percent higher than the 10-year average. In addition, numbers of 12+ inch were 34 percent higher than the average. The wild trout stocking program has been very important to bolstering trout populations in the **Waupaca River**.

Annually, the river is stocked with 18,000 feral brown trout fingerlings. To date, such stocked wild trout comprise almost 40 percent of the adult population. Electrofishing surveys on other streams in **Southern** and **Central Waupaca County** show population density and size structure at or above average. Surveys in **Shawano County** show some decline in numbers which may be partly due to low water/flow conditions and warm summer temperatures in 2005."

—Al Niebur, fisheries biologist, Shawano.

"Trout surveys conducted in 2005 along portions of the **Grant** and **Little Grant River** systems reveal that both have an estimated brown trout population of 600 trout per mile.

Both also offer anglers the opportunity of trophy fish, with brown trout over 20 inches present. Other streams of interest that anglers may want to try are **Borah Creek**, **McPherson Branch**, and the **Rountree Branch** — all

of which have an established brown trout population with public access available."

—Kurt Welke, fisheries biologist, Fitchburg.

"The **Onion River** and its tributaries should be the highlight of trout fishing opportunities in the entire southeastern region. Special regulations put in place in 2004 on all **Onion River** watershed streams upstream of **County E** are really paying off. Some anglers said they caught more trout on a typical day in the special regulation sections of the **Onion River** than they normally catch on some of the best southwestern Wisconsin streams."

—Doug Welch, senior fisheries biologist, Sturtevant.

"There are 17 **Category 5** special regulation streams in the **La Crosse area**, 13 of which are "artificial lures only, catch and release" streams. Most of these are small brook trout streams, the rest, brown trout waters with good trophy trout potential. There are also four streams where harvest of smaller fish is encouraged by an increase of the bag limit to 5 trout but they must be less than 12 inches. These streams are starting to provide some real quality fishing with many trout in the 12-15 inch range, good numbers of 16-19 inch fish and some real trophies in the 24+ inch category."

—Dave Vetrano, fisheries supervisor, La Crosse.

"The fishing forecast for trout in **southwestern Wisconsin** for trout is nothing short of fantastic. Almost the entire trout fishery is now a wild trout fishery and most of the streams contain multiple year classes of fish. Growth rates have remained good, and because of the significant number of older fish, most streams now contain significant numbers of medium to larger trout. A number of shocker surveys of the catch-and-release streams and stream segments found across the board outstanding trout populations even late in the season. Since these trout are predisposed to survive and reproduce in the wild, they have a thinner, racier build as well as a smaller ultimate size. The adult wild brown trout average 10 to 13 inches with big trout measuring 14, 15 or 16 inches and trophies measuring 17 or 18 inches. Wild trout greater than 18 inches are very scarce."

—Gene Van Dyck, fisheries biologist, Dodgeville

numbers of trout in **Johnson** and **Woods** creeks in **Florence County**. Sections of the **Pine** and **Popple** wild rivers continue to produce good brook trout populations, with an occasional trophy brown.

An intensive beaver removal effort in tributaries of the **Pine** and **Popple** rivers has greatly improved conditions for trout in that watershed. Streams are again running colder and trout can again seek spawning sites and refuge from the warm waters of summer.

That was especially important during the drought and warm water conditions of this past summer."

—Bob Young, fisheries biologist, Woodruff.

"Last summer, trout numbers in the **Prairie River** climbed 26 percent in one survey and nine percent in another. A third survey station showed a 13 percent decline. These three stations averaged 2,100 trout per mile, which is nine percent above the 2004 estimates but still 35 percent below the long-term average.



*TUDARE program update*

# Stream restoration training taps pent up demand

By Laura Hewitt

It was a packed house — doubtless the largest training TU has held so far! More than 90 TU volunteers from Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and beyond gathered for a session on planning stream restoration projects at the Living Waters Bible Camp in Westby March 25-26.

The training was planned and organized by TU National staff and a committee of volunteers as a part of TU's new Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE) to help increase the capability of regional chapters to organize restoration projects.

The Illinois Council of TU generously provided the support to make this event possible,

The training was kicked off with a primer on stream restorations basics by Wisconsin's own Bob Hunt, retired WDNR trout researcher and author of *Trout Stream Therapy*.

Several chapters then presented case-studies of their projects, highlighting various important considerations in stream projects, such as planning, fundraising, recruiting help, organizing volunteers, and seeking publicity.

After lunch there was a panel discussion with representatives of many partner organizations. These people spoke about the best ways to partner with them, as well as describing the resources they can bring to the table in a restoration.

In the afternoon, participants had the option go on a stream tour with WDNR Fisheries Manager Dave Vetrano or enjoy some early season fishing on Timber Coulee or the West Fork of the Kickapoo.

On Sunday, participants got a chance to put their new knowledge to work by developing plans for their own stream restoration projects. We got valuable help in coordinating that session from Diana Toledo, local groups manager of the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

Each participant received a toolkit filled with useful resources on project planning. For those who



**TUDARE ACTIVITIES**

WDNR Fisheries Supervisor Dave Vetrano (top) explains stream restoration principles to workshop participants during a Saturday afternoon tour of Timber Coulee Creek. Laura Hewitt (center) goes over project planning with the team from Central Wisconsin TU, while John "Duke" Welter (below) presents a program.

were not able to attend the training, most of the material available in the toolkit can be downloaded from the training web page at [www.tu.org/TUDARE](http://www.tu.org/TUDARE).



## New book explores Kickapoo land and waters

By Harry L. Peterson

After many years of fishing, most of us conclude, or maybe discover, that catching fish is less important than it was when we became involved with this obsession. For each of us, what becomes more important than catching fish is something different, but it probably includes the observation by John Voelker, "I fish...because I love the environment where trout are found, which are invariably beautiful..."

In her new book, *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley* (UW Press, 2005), Lynn Heasley does not write about fly fishing, rarely mentions it; but she does write about a place that Midwest fly fishers find beautiful, Southwestern Wisconsin.



In doing so, she explores important questions that have something to do with why we fish.

**Pioneering farm conservation**

Heasley describes the federal experiment in farming conservation practices in the Coon Valley watershed in the 1930s, the role that Aldo Leopold played in helping to shape that experiment, and the valley's importance to soil conservation.

The hilly terrain of Southwestern Wisconsin, and European farming techniques that imposed itself on the landscape rather than conforming to it, resulted in an enormous annual loss of topsoil. If contour farming techniques that we take for granted today had not been adopted, the yearly soil loss would have been so great that neither farming nor trout streams could have survived. Fly fishers and state natural resource departments learned long ago that the quality of the water where trout live is essential in developing a self-sustaining trout population. It soon became apparent that the quality of that water was dependent on a healthy watershed. The



Coon Valley experiments over 70 years ago made an important national contribution to that understanding.

**Three counties examined**

Heasley mostly focuses on three towns in the Kickapoo Valley, all in Vernon County — Liberty, Clinton, and Stark. She explores the history of each town, including recent con-

troversies in each of them during the last 50 years. She describes changes in land ownership, farming practices, and land use using the latest GIS techniques. The book includes a review of historic documents in Vernon County and interviews with longtime residents.

*Continued on p. 17*



### MANNING THE TABLE

Jim Larose (left) and Henry Koltz were among the Southeastern Wisconsin TU members helping out at this year's Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel Sport Show.

## KICKAPOO: book explores land

*Continued from p. 17*

The discussions of the towns are held together by an exploration of attitudes about land use and property rights.

Liberty Township is located between Viola and Viroqua, intersected by State Hwy. 56. (If you think of streams more easily than you do roads in this part of Wisconsin, think of Bishop Branch Creek.)

Heasley explores the history of soil conservation in that town and the effects of absentee corporate beef farmers who removed the fences, permitting cattle to graze in the forests. She also follows Woodland Farms, a real estate agency that sold lots to Midwestern urban dwellers from Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota and whose owner was convicted of violating Wisconsin real estate law.

Clinton Township is six miles north of Liberty, northeast of Westby. (Again, for the trout obsessed, think of Cty. D and the small streams just above the West Fork of the Kickapoo.) Like much of the Kickapoo valley area, Clinton Township is poor. In the 1960s, the Amish began moving in from relatively flat agricultural areas in Ohio, bought up land, and farmed alongside struggling longtime residents. Like earlier settlers from Europe and elsewhere, they brought their traditions with them and did not initially adapt to the contours of the hilly terrain, practices that have been changing.

However, the Amish live light on the land, using little energy. They use the roads, but do not buy gasoline to help pay for road improvements. At the same time, they pay property taxes, but school their children themselves. Heasley explores the resulting tensions in a way that

provides insight into both the gentle newcomers and the longtime residents in that area.

Stark Township is in the Kickapoo watershed and includes the Kickapoo River along Hwy. 131 between the villages of LaFarge and Rockton. Because this watershed suffered from six catastrophic floods between 1907 and 1956, a large dam was planned to control nature. The dam construction was proposed and begun at a time of increased national environmental awareness that prompted turmoil about and within the Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency responsible for the project. The resulting controversy involved Pat Lucey, Wisconsin's Governor, and later, newly elected Senator Russ Feingold. In between, it involved national organizations intent on protecting the environment and local residents looking for economic development.

The dam was almost completed and then abandoned. To the surprise of almost everyone, the federal government that had acquired the land by purchasing it from local landowners, turned for new ownership to the Ho-Chunk, formerly the Winnebago tribe, whose ancestors had lived on the property beginning the early 19th century. The result is the 8,600-acre Kickapoo Valley Reserve, a protected area where old fields are being reclaimed by the forests.

These three townships are near one another and might appear to be of a single piece, but their actual stories are intricate, fascinating, and amazingly varied. Heasley develops their stories in a way that makes each of them intriguing. She highlights some of the contradictions that residents of the Kickapoo Valley and the rest of us have about land, its use, and ownership. In doing so, she helps us appreciate this beautiful part of Wisconsin.

Heasley writes, "The Kickapoo Valley could be any hardscrabble place where farmers are having a hard time holding on to the land, where teenagers are bored and talk about leaving, and where local officials are praying for economic development." The valley is a place of favorite spring creeks for many of us and, with Heasley's help, the next time we drive to southwestern Wisconsin thinking about hatches and whether we have flies that will work, we will also think about the land that holds those streams and the people who live near them.

(Harry Peterson is a member of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter. -Ed.)



### NOW THAT'S SOME ROCK MOVER

Former WDNR trout researcher Bob Hunt (left) admires the "rock claw" invented by Hornberg TU's Bud Nehring at the State Council Banquet in Wisconsin Rapids Feb. 4. See p. 20 for more on the Hornberg Chapter's unique stream improvement tools. The WITU banquet raised over \$7,000 this year. Featured auction items included a maple fly tying table and a cedar fly chest filled with flies from some of the region's top tyers.

## "Keep feet wet" rule still in effect despite MI ruling

The WDNR is reminding anglers that they must remain in the stream to remain legal when fishing along private land.

Under Wisconsin's Constitution, streams and rivers belong to the public, so anglers can fish on any stream or river running through public or private land.

Because the river banks are privately owned, however, anglers must remain in the water while fishing along private land, according to Mike Lutz, a Department of Natural Resources attorney.

Recent headlines about a U.S. Supreme Court decision to refuse to consider a Michigan public access case have prompted some calls from anglers and others, but the court's decision in the Michigan case doesn't affect public access laws in Wisconsin, Lutz says.

Dave Vetrano, fisheries supervisor for Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon counties, says that knowing the law is important when fishing anywhere in Wisconsin, including along the nearly 900 miles of classified trout waters in that four-county area.

"Although there are 200 miles of public access in our area as a result of easements or state ownership of land, the majority of good water is surrounded by private land," Vetrano says.

While anglers have access to navigable waters through road "right of ways" and other public crossings, they must keep their feet wet, he says. The only exception to the keep-your-feet-wet rule is that ob-

structions such as log jams or dams may be portaged over land by the shortest route.

An easier approach, Vetrano says, is to stop and talk to the landowner. "Most just want to know who's on their land and will rarely deny access," he says. "It's also a good opportunity to develop some new relationships."

Wisconsin's laws concerning public access to lakes is the same as for streams — keep your feet wet. While the beds of natural lakes are owned by the state, adjacent landowners have exclusive use of areas left dry when the water is low.

### More on the MI shoreline case

The case of *Glass v. Goeckel* was originally brought by a 73-year-old woman in Alcona County, MI, who wanted to walk the beaches of Lake Huron. Glass' neighbors, the defendants in the case, tried to keep her off the beach as a trespasser.

The Michigan Supreme Court ultimately heard the case, and last summer the court ruled that beach walking is allowed up to the ordinary high water mark.

By the U.S. Supreme Court refusing to take on the Michigan case, the ruling stands and beachcombing is legal in Michigan.

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# Hornberg Chapter creating tools of the trade for hands-on stream enhancement

By Dan Holland and Bud Nehring

During the past six years, our Frank Hornberg Chapter has developed a number of stream enhancement practices and devices which have had an extremely beneficial impact upon a number of streams — streams such as the Tomorrow River, Stedman Creek, Peterson Creek, and Poncho Creek in Central Wisconsin — without a huge outlay of money and without the use of a single piece of heavy equipment.

In order to understand what we have done to improve streams in our area, we need to first briefly describe the environment in which we have been obliged to work. The streams in central Wisconsin are low-gradient, heavily overgrown, terribly degraded streams that suffer from dangerously high wa-

ter temperatures in summer and wide fluctuations in flow throughout the year.

To deal with these conditions, we have employed a number of strategies and invented a number of devices to help us double the trout populations in the areas in which we've worked.

Some of the tools we have developed facilitate construction of overhead structures. Other devices have been created to help install half logs and reposition large, in-stream rocks to redirect stream flow in order to keep the overhead structures and half logs from filling up with sand and silt.

Construction of our overhead structures is performed in five steps — driving pilings, building overhead platforms, covering the platforms with sandbags, placing sod over the sandbags, and, finally, staking down the sod.

## Jet Pump



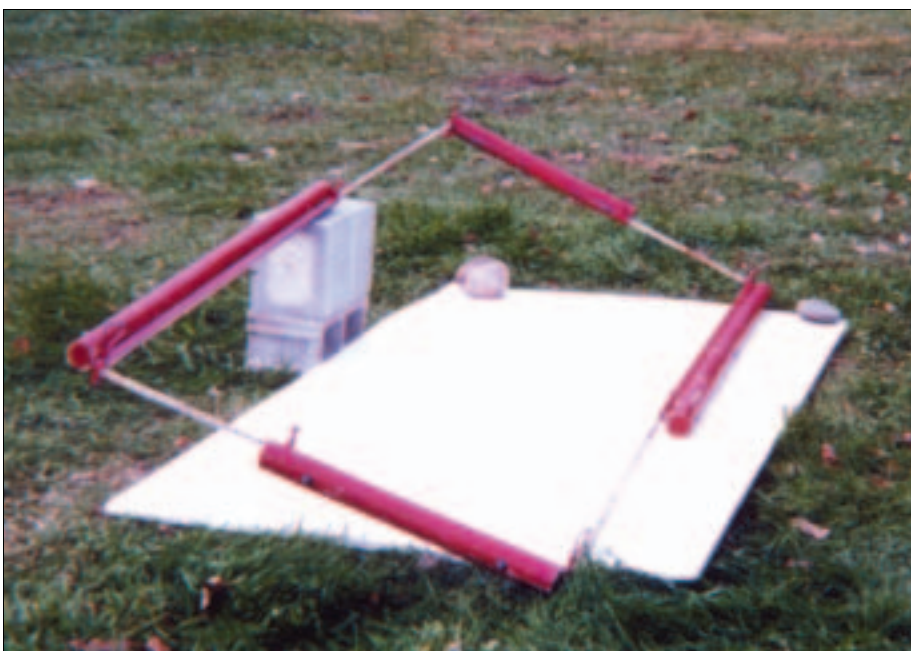
Since most of our streams here in central Wisconsin have thick cobble substrates, a jet pump is needed to drive in the pilings.

We purchased a jet pump for \$600 and spent an additional \$350 for the necessary hoses, fittings, and pump cage materials. Our total expense for this vitally important piece

of equipment was under a thousand dollars.

We recognize that a jet pump, unlike the tools discussed below, represents a considerable investment for a chapter, but we find it is a critical aid to stream enhancement.

## Expandable Overhead Jig



To facilitate the layout of our overhead bank cover structures — all of which are constructed in eight-foot sections — we devised an expandable overhead jig.

The jig, when stored, measures only 10" x 7 1/2", but when in use (as shown above) it can be extended to 40" x 8 1/2 feet.

The use of the jig enables us to position posts precisely where we want them, thereby greatly ensuring the structural integrity of the overhead cover.

The eight-foot sections are constructed using 2" x 6" stringers no more than four feet apart. The ex-

pandable jig is constructed of 1/2" square tubing, 3/4" square tubing that is bolted to 3" PVC pipe used for flotation.

The entire cost of the materials used in the fabrication of the overhead jig is about \$80.

## Sandbag Holder



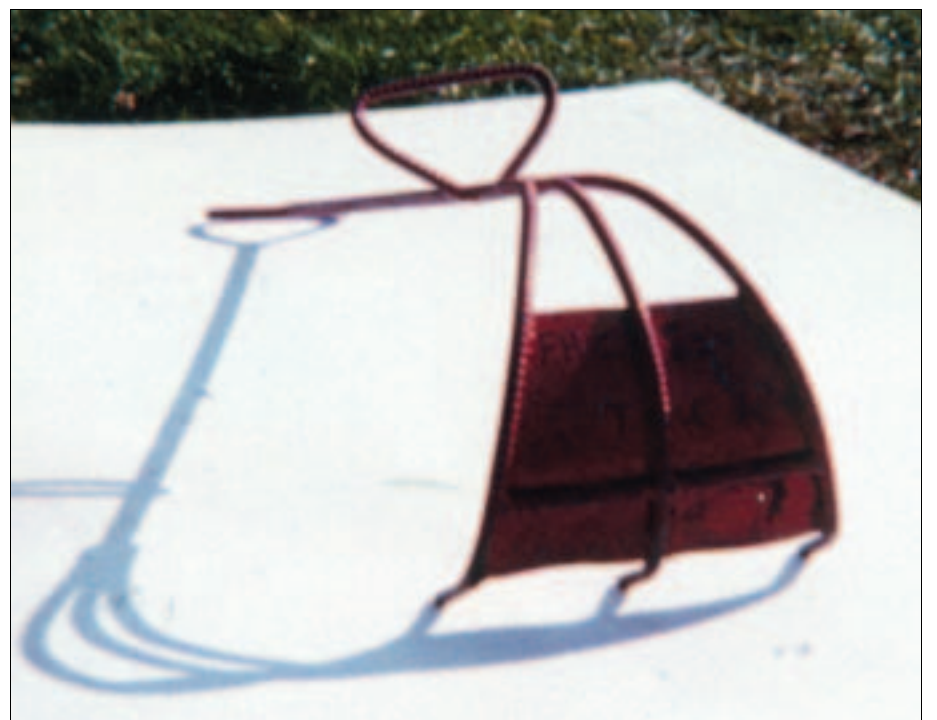
The next device is so simple in design and construction that it seems impossible that its use has doubled our productivity in filling sandbags!

The sandbag holder" removes the necessity of someone holding a sandbag open while a second person

shovels in the sand. Its use also makes it much easier to tie sandbags shut once they are filled.

The frame of the sandbag holder is constructed of 1/2" conduit, and the 6" long legs are made from 1/2" rebar. Total cost of each sandbag holder is approximately \$10.

## Sod Claw



The sod claw is a device that will be greatly appreciated by anyone who has ever tried to remove sod by hand! Once the ground has been broken with a shovel, the sod claw is inserted and does a good job of raking up sod in large pieces. The cost of our

The sod claw is made of 1/2" rebar with a heavier 5/8" rebar handle. A metal shield is affixed to the claw to prevent it from digging too deeply into the soil. Twenty-gauge sheet metal is used for the shield and it is welded to the frame of the claw at the desired height. The cost of our sod claw was less than \$20.

Rock Claw



This strange device is our infamous rock claw. With this “precision tool,” we are able to move rocks weighing in excess of 400 pounds.

We use the claw to move rocks next to the stream for final placement near our overhead structures and half-logs. Without these rocks, the current may not be strong enough to keep those structures free of sand and silt. Having lost a couple of painstakingly crafted structures to sedimentation, the rock claw became a necessity. Once again, necessity became the father of intention!

Our rock claw — which can accommodate five people pulling at once — is 7’ in overall length and has a width of 3’. Half-inch rebar is used for the claw itself, and 1” thick-wall water pipe is used for the frame and handles.

If the handles were lengthened, such a device could be used by even more than five people. (The turnout for our work events has not necessitated the additional handle length.) As impossible as it may seem, the total cost of the materials used in our rock claw is under \$50.

A word of caution is warranted in regard to the use of the rock claw. Always face the claw end, never face away from it, for, once a rock begins moving, you want to make sure it doesn’t roll up on you leg! Used carefully, the rock claw is a remarkably valuable instrument for stream enhancement.

The results of a re-positioned, large rock brings about the kind of instant gratification that is a great payoff on our labors of love.

Half-log Installer and Structure Nailers



Here are two tools that are similar in appearance. The half log installer (above left) is comprised of 1 ¼” water pipe with rebar handles.

It has a sturdy driver head that is 1 ½ feet long and five inches in diameter. We used 5” rolled steel pipe with 1” rebar insert filled with concrete for weight.

This device allows us to drive the rebar that holds a half log in place into the cobble much easier than if we used a sledge hammer. It also keeps hands out of harm’s way. The entire cost of the materials for the

half-log installer is less than \$50.

The next tools we use to build overhead structures are several styles of nailers comprised of steel water pipe with an inside rebar punch.

These simple devices allow us to drive spikes into the tops and backs of overhead structures without getting an unwelcome face full of cold water in the process.

The three sizes of nailers we use are shown in the accompanying picture, and all three of them cost us a paltry \$10 in materials.

Two-person Sod Litter



Another useful and easy-to-make device is the two-person sod litter. It is made of 2” x 4”s five feet long with sculpted handles for ease of carrying. It has a ¾” treated platform that is 2’ x 3’ in size. We have two such litters, and the pair cost about \$40.

Not pictured, but also hand, are the 1” x 1” pointed sod stakes we construct to secure sod to the sand-bags. Inasmuch as the stakes come from scrap lumber, they are basically free. We have a number of sawmills in our area, and they are glad to have us to take away their scraps!



Hornberg stream work in progress



The stream improvement devices we have described here have proven to be of immense value in the Hornberg Chapter’s efforts to protect and enhance our precious coldwater resources in central Wisconsin.

If they prove similarly useful to you in your locale, then this article has most certainly not been written in vain.

It is altogether humbling to realize that our inventions represent merely a footnote to the pioneering efforts performed by our gracious mentor, Bob Hunt, years ago (see Hunt’s classic book *Trout Stream Therapy*).

It is similarly humbling to watch Roger Widner of Avalanche, WI, do more stream enhancement work in a single day than our chapter is able to do in an entire year! However, without the use of heavy equipment, we are restricted in what we are able to do.

The success of the Hornberg Chapter’s stream enhancement efforts is borne out each year when the WDNR conducts a shocking of the Middle Tomorrow River below Nelsonville.

The Hornberg Chapter has worked in this area for a decade now, there are more than two and a half times as many trout in the improved section downstream from Nelsonville than in the area upstream where no stream enhancement work has been done.



Wisconsin Trout book review and excerpt

# New Osthoff book explores giving nymphs movement

*Active Nymphing: Aggressive Strategies for Casting, Rigging and Moving Nymphs*, Rich Osthoff, Stackpole Books, 175 pp., \$19.95.

By John Welter

Over the past century and a half, subsurface feeding trout have tempted our fly fishing authors to find the secrets of successful nymph

fishing. They've had public spitting matches with the purist dry fly crowd, and they've endured looks of scorn and mumbled epithets like "Jig-fishers!" as they learned to fish beadheaded nymphs. But they persevere, because when all is said and done, the science still tells us that 80 or 90% of a trout's diet is taken beneath the surface.

For one, I'm grateful that G.E.M. Skues stood up to the dry-only dogmatists in 19th century England and, in a 1931 article, asserted in his careful, lawyerly way, "nymph fishing has a charm not inferior to that of dry fly fishing." I like the suggestion made by Skues and Frank Sawyer, the English riverkeeper who popularized the pheasant tail

nymph, that a good nymph fisher develops an unexplainable "sixth sense" of when a fish has taken an unseen nymph. At times, though, one can sound very canny reporting reliance on that sixth sense when a hookup was really just blind luck. Nymphing gives the angler an opportunity to investigate and imitate

*Continued on p. 23*

## Enhanced strike detection is a part of active nymphing

By Rich Osthoff

Actively moving the nymph requires the line to be tight, though not necessarily straight. I often strip a nymph while intentionally allowing the fly line to bow or drag in the current, but to actively move the nymph, you do need tight-line contact with the fly, and a tight line transmits strikes up the line to the rod and your hands. The straighter the line and the faster you're moving the nymph, the more quickly and forcefully a strike is transmitted. On strikes to fast-moving nymphs, many trout hook themselves, but with practice, you'll learn to feel even subtle takes of slow-moving nymphs.

Keeping the rod tip low keeps you in more direct contact with the nymph and puts you in position to strike immediately as you detect subtle resistance. It also puts you in position to set with a dramatic sweep of the rod if you need to move considerable line to drive the hook home. Striking quickly when you feel even subtle resistance is critical. As you detect the take, the trout is feeling unnatural resistance, which means it will release the nymph pronto.

What few anglers appreciate is that fishing the nymph actively on a tight line allows you to see more subsurface strikes. Because a tight line allows you to feel takes, you're not as dependent on watching the indicator and are free to watch the zone around the nymph. When you focus on that area, you will see the take, or some sign of it, with surprising frequency. This allows you to strike immediately — you don't have to wait to feel the take or see the indicator move. You can hit a trout before its senses inform it that your nymph, which looked very alive, is a phony. When you visually detect a subsurface take, your chances of driving the hook home before the trout spits the nymph go way up.

No matter how convincing an artificial nymph looks, the ruse is over quickly once a trout grabs it. But isn't that what strike indicators are for — to telegraph strikes immediately, before trout can reject the nymph? Well, the good news is that you will indeed detect many more takes by dead drifting with an indicator than without one. The bad news is that even with an indicator, many subsurface takes, especially to dead-drifting nymphs, are detected too late. Often there is a delay of a second or more between the take and the indicator actually moving, and that's plenty of time for a trout to expel an artificial nymph.

We're all aware that we've missed a fish when the indicator hangs or darts and we set the hook but feel no resistance. What few nymph fishers appreciate is how frequently trout take and reject a dead-drifting nymph so quickly that the indicator never moves, or moves so subtly that the angler doesn't detect it. How do I know this? I often dead drift at the start of a presentation to sink the nymph and then begin to actively manipulate it as it reaches the desired depth or target zone. And it's amazing how often, as I tighten the line to be-

gin moving the fly, I discover that a trout already has the nymph, which it took during the dead-drift phase with no hint from the indicator. Though indicators are valuable tools, fishing a tight line and watching the zone around the nymph allow you to detect many strikes that you wouldn't notice by simply watching an indicator.

When I'm dead drifting, I usually watch the indicator, unless I'm nymphing to visible trout. But when I'm fishing an active nymph on a tight line, I have the luxury of watching the zone around the nymph at all ranges and in all

visual excitement of dry-fly fishing. In many of my nymphing sessions on spring creeks, tailwaters, freestone rivers, spring ponds, and lakes, I see fish take my nymph, or at least some sign of the take, the majority of the time — and that's always a fun way to nymph.

Watching the zone around the nymph makes all the difference when trout charge the imitation on impact and grab it just below the surface or on the drop, which is common when you're prospecting with substantial nymphs to aggressive fish. Strikes that are instantaneous or on the drop aren't telegraphed by the indicator, because as the nymph is dropping, there is still considerable slack in the line, and the indicator doesn't move until this slack is eliminated. A quick subsurface take is usually revealed by a disturbance on the surface. If you watch the area around the fly from the moment of impact, you will often see a bulge or swirl, especially on flat water.

As presentation distance increases, fishing the nymph actively on a tight line and watching the zone around the nymph for visible takes become increasingly important. It's tough to dead drift effectively at long ranges across multiple current lanes and to see subtle movements of distant indicators. Also, it takes longer to transmit hook-setting energy to the nymph on a long strike, so the quicker you detect a take, the more likely it is that a trout will still have the nymph when you set the hook.

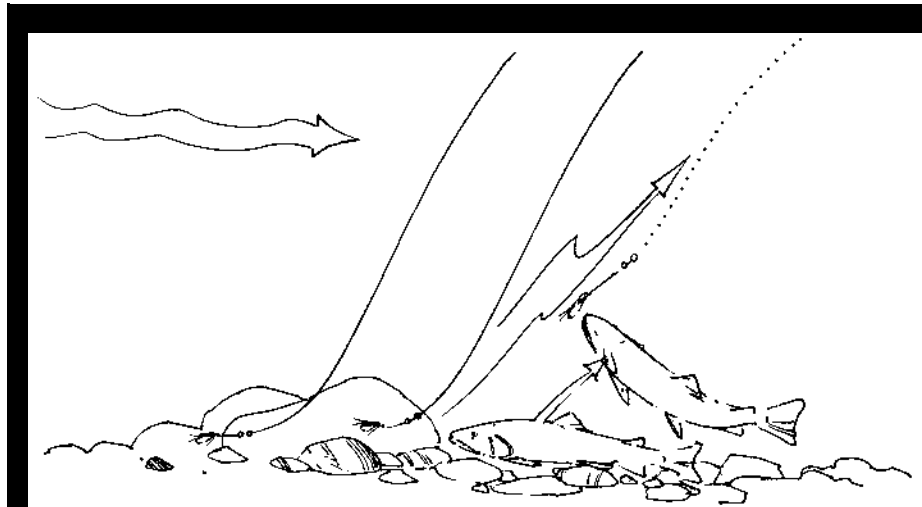
By watching the zone around the nymph, you'll often glimpse trout that move toward the fly but

don't take for a variety of reasons. Perhaps it's not within their comfortable strike zone, they may see it too late, or the presentation may be a bit too active for their present mood. A follow-up presentation closer to the bottom or structure, or a more deliberate presentation, often takes such fish.

Many times, while prospecting at a fast clip, I've moved a good fish to an active nymph and have wound up hooking that fish on a later visit when it was prowling more aggressively. Like streamers, substantial nymphs fished actively are great locator flies; they have the power to move top-end fish a few feet, revealing their locations, even when those fish are not in the mood to strike. This may not sound like a major advantage, but it can turn out to be. Top-end trout often must be located and worked repeatedly before you can hook and land them.

I keep my eyes peeled particularly for flashes and follows when I'm running and gunning and stripping on those long, slow-water zones that many dead-drift nymphers bypass or prospect inefficiently. A single fish showing to a moving nymph in slow water often divulges the location of a pod or the starting point of productive water, and that's a good time to gear down and begin prospecting more thoroughly.

*(Rich Osthoff is a familiar face at Wisconsin TU chapter meetings. This excerpt is reprinted by permission of Stackpole Books. -Ed.)*



***A take of a dead-drifting nymph is usually by a trout that is all but stationary. A strike to a moving nymph usually involves a moving trout, which makes the take much more visible to the angler. Seeing the take, or some sign of the take, allows you to set the hook instantly, before the trout has a chance to reject your imitation. Fishing the nymph actively and watching the zone around the nymph brings much of the visual excitement of dry-fly fishing to nymph fishing.***

spotting conditions, and I see takes in off-color water, broken current, low light, and at surprising depths and distances.

One advantage of moving the nymph is that strikes become much more readily observed. A take of a dead-drifting nymph is often accomplished with a slight tipping or a lateral shift by a trout that is all but stationary. Even if you are dead drifting right to visible trout, that kind of subtle take can be difficult to see, especially if glare, wind, silt, or current is limiting your ability to see subsurface details. But a strike to a moving nymph usually involves a moving trout and is much more apparent. Indeed, takes of dead-drifting nymphs are tough or impossible to observe in many kinds of water and lighting conditions, but strikes to moving nymphs are easily seen.

As a moving trout grabs a nymph and abruptly turns back toward its customary feeding station, it transmits a major flash that is highly visible, even in deep or dirty water. That turning flash is a telltale indication that the trout already has the nymph. Once your brain is programmed to recognize that homeward turn, you will begin to strike instinctively without delay and drive the hook home with more consistency.

To me, one of the most visually stimulating moments in fly fishing is the subsurface take and turn of a big trout and the resulting strobe-like flash off its broad flanks. Indeed, one of the great allures of fishing nymphs actively is that it brings to nymphing much of the

# Black squirrel tail steelhead fly

By Larry Meicher

After someone saw my pheasant-backed squirrel pattern in a recent *Wisconsin Trout*, he asked what I did with the tail from my black squirrel.

Well, here it is. This pattern uses that black squirrel tail for the wing of this pattern that has the shape of many salmon and steelhead flies.

This is one of my favorite spring steelhead flies. Black is always a good color for steelhead, and the hot pink tag is a nice attractor color used by many steelheaders.

I hope you can get out in the coming weeks to check it out now that the spring weather has finally hit.

### Instructions

Begin by tying in the tag. I use pink mylar instead of a fur or yarn. This may give the tag a bit of flash to the fish.

Next tie in both the black chenille body material and the gold ribbing.

Wrap the body with the chenille. Tie off and trim the excess.

Now wrap the ribbing up to the head area and tie off.

Attach a black hackle and wrap several turns. Tie off the hackle and work the majority of the barbs to the underside of the fly, securing them with thread.

Finally, attach the black squirrel tail wing.

Wrap the head and coat it with several coats of head cement.

(Black squirrels, by the way, are actually a melanistic, or black pigmented, type of our common eastern grey squirrel. Black squirrels are common in our area.)

**MATERIALS LIST**  
Black Squirrel Tail Wet

**Hook:** Mustad 36890 #8 (Black limerick eye extra strong hook)

**Thread:** Black

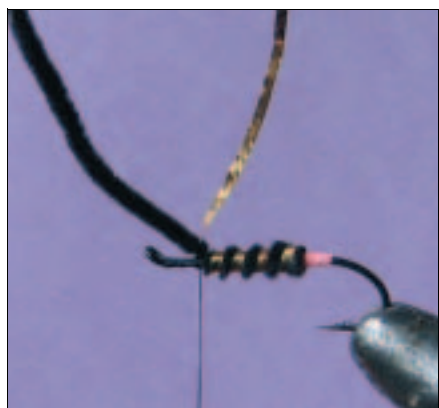
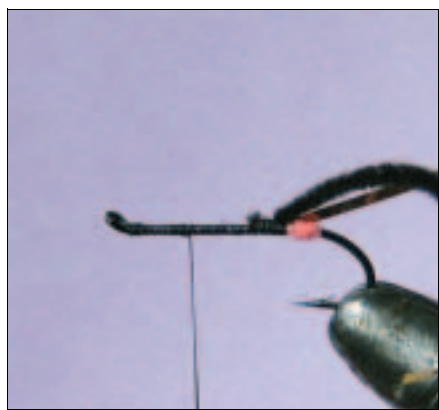
**Tag:** Medium hot pink mylar

**Body:** Small black chenille

**Ribbing:** Medium gold tinsel

**Hackle:** Black

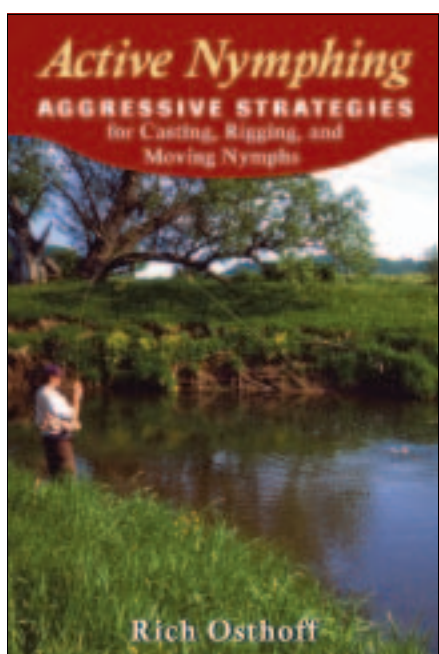
**Wing:** Black squirrel tail



## NYMPHING: book explores active fly movement

Continued from p. 22

Nymphing gives the angler an opportunity to investigate and imitate the food forms fish take most of the time.



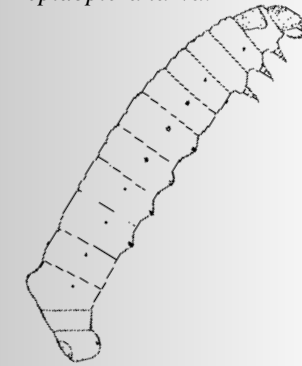
If you study your favorite fishing water, observe what fish are taking throughout the season and what in-

sects are there all year, you can eventually develop what I call a "Home Waters Fly Box" with effective imitations to fish all season, both wet and dry.

I'm grateful, too, that Rich Osthoff, a well-known author and guide from the Mauston area, has offered his latest book, *Active Nymphing: Aggressive Strategies for Casting, Rigging and Moving Nymphs*. It's an inquisitive, well-written next step in learning ways to present and move nymphs on trout waters. Osthoff has fished many western rivers, but he also spends plenty of time on our driftless area streams, and they show up with great fondness in this book.

In the past, more authors suggested that nymphing is best done "dead-drift," the insect tumbling in the currents on or near the bottom, than done while imparting action to the fly. Drag was to be dreaded, and anglers who moved their flies were the exception rather than the rule. More attention was paid to eliminating drag and detecting strikes than to moving the fly. There were exceptions, of course. Edward

Lepidoptera larva.



### Lepidoptera (Aquatic Caterpillars):

Nine species and six genera in the family Pyralidae are the taxa of moths found in Wisconsin that have aquatic larvae. The larval stages inhabit rooted aquatic macrophytes and feed by mining the plant stems or by feeding on the attached algae.

Adults are nondescript moths that hold their wings "tent-like" over their bodies.

Hewitt (1935) talked about hand-twist retrieve to imitate some nymph movements during the dead drift downstream after an upstream cast. Jim Leisenring (1951) fished wets and talked about the lift (now named after him) of a wet to the surface to imitate an emerging insect. Gary Borger talks about the "strip-tease" technique (pause, then strip).

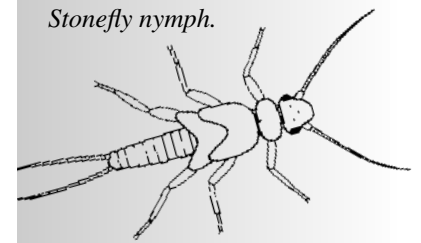
Osthoff moves the field forward in *Active Nymphing*, suggesting a wide range of approaches to moving flies and covering the water. In this, his third book, he's mastered the descriptive instruction of some complicated on-the-water stuff, and Dave Hall's pen-and-ink drawings offer good perspective looks at this three-dimensional angling. (Dry fly anglers have it easy, with a technique that lends itself to two dimensions.)

Osthoff describes some useful downstream-and-across techniques for fishing along overhung banks with nymphs, and he offers some hints on micronymphing on tailwaters that even experienced anglers on the San Juan, Missouri, or Big-horn should heed. Along the way, he hints that southwest Wisconsin's streams — currently holding a plethora of 12-15 inch brown trout — would provide even larger trout with more protective regulations.

There's no reluctance to offer opinions here. Osthoff tells us that if lead shot were to be banned in more places, manufacturers would devote more effort to developing acceptable nontoxic substitutes. He suggests that somebody should start with a nontoxic soft putty that doesn't stiffen in the cold. He tells us how to make a Palsa foam strike indicator movable. And, for cripes sake, get out and explore: "If you're looking for high-quality public trout water and genuine solitude, invest in hiking boots.... Some of the best back country waters can be fished on short backpacking trips or day trips by anyone who is willing to walk a few miles beyond the developed roads."

All through the book, a conversational tone keeps you following

Stonefly nymph.



### Plecoptera (Stoneflies):

Presently, 58 species of stoneflies in 8 families and 25 genera have been identified from Wisconsin. All larvae are aquatic, and almost all inhabit streams; larvae of a few species may live in cold oligotrophic lakes. Stonefly larvae differ from most aquatic insects by having two long filamentous caudal cerci (tail filaments) and an elongate or flattened appearance. Larvae obtain respiratory-oxygen from water through their cuticle or primitive gill structures, and as a result are relegated to cold, fast-flowing, highly oxygenated streams.

Feeding habits vary among families with most being herbivore-detritivores, although several families have predatory species. Lifecycles are relatively long with some taxa living 3 years or more in the nymphal stage. Some species of stoneflies have some of the earliest emergences in the year, hatching as early as January and February, and the adults are often seen crawling on the snow along streambanks.

WDNR graphics

explanations that could lose readers of (many) another author. I like that; too many turgid "definitive" books sit on my shelf, waiting for a translator. Rather, Osthoff tells us how to "staccato strip" and to actively move our nymphs: "swing, pump, strip, tease, drift, drop and lift" techniques.

This isn't a big fly pattern book. If you've read Osthoff's other books, you'll know he likes to fish soft-hackle wooly worms and oversized scuds, and recipes for both are found in detail. You might glean a couple of other patterns, but by and large, this is a book aimed at ways to fish the flies, and you can use any nymph with materials you can "activate" by some kind of motion.

In recent years, I've worked to develop several good downstream nymphing techniques which I've never found in books or articles. One of them is in *Active Nymphing*, and I learned several more to be tried on Wisconsin waters soon. I suspect the rest, and a lot more, will make it into his next book.

*Active Nymphing* covers the waters well, and if you don't learn at least a handful of new approaches, you're in a league by yourself.

# Friends program begins 2006 campaign

By John Cantwell and Steve Hill  
Friends Program Co-chairs

As you read this, the Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited 2006 campaign is underway.

All monies donated to Friends goes directly to the resources. Over the past 15 years, the fund and dedicated over \$135,000 to state coldwater resources in the areas of stream improvement, education, and land acquisition.

Formed in 1990, the Friends of Wisconsin TU program allows concerned anglers to make annual contributions of \$100 or more to a special fund managed by the WITU State Council.

Many of our most famous streams face threats from stormwater discharges, ag runoff, and development. Yet there is something that YOU as an individual can do to help correct these problems that hurt the coldwater resources in the Badger

State. You can become a "Friend of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited."

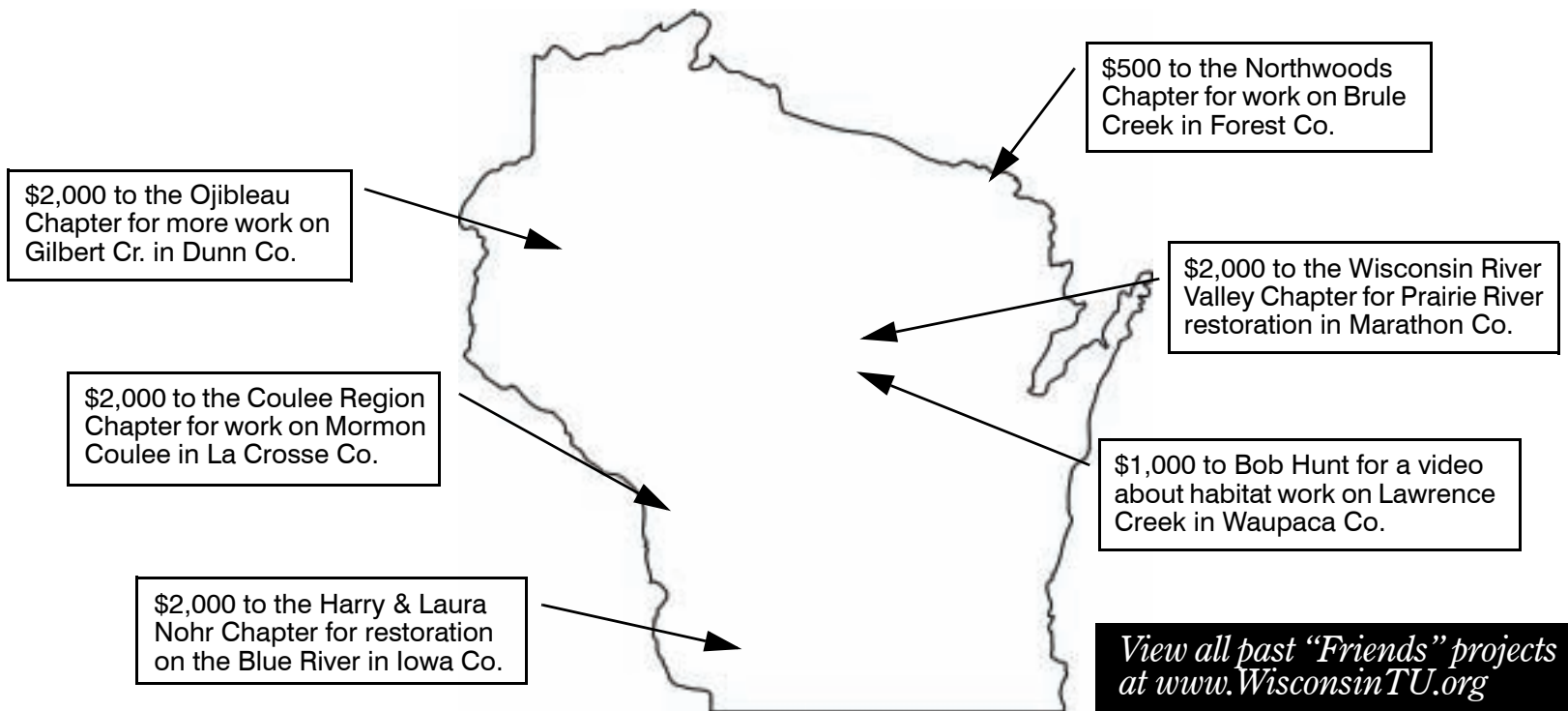
Your annual contribution of \$100 or more means you will be listed with all the other "Friends" in four consecutive issues of *Wisconsin Trout*. Also, while supplies last, we will send you the great Wisconsin TU hat shown here.

Just as importantly, though, you'll know you have made a difference in preserving and enhancing Wisconsin's trout fishery.



**2006 FRIENDS HAT PREMIUM**  
Look sharp wearing this WITU fishing hat. It's yours with your contribution.

## Over \$135,000 devoted to trout resources since 1991. The latest projects include...



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**Enclosed is my check for \$100 or more.**

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% John H. Cantwell  
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