

# BROOKIE NEWS



<<< Illustration “One Last Look - Brook Trout” courtesy of Bob White of Whitefish Studio

## **Newsletter of The Central Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CWTU)**

**May 2014**

**Prez Sez**

No Board meeting in May. When we have major events like TroutFest, Casting/Kayak Clinic, and the Fall Banquet, those count as a Board meeting unless there are matters of urgency needing our attention. We had a healthy turnout for the Casting/Kayak Clinic on May 13, in spite of the windy, chilly weather. Last year we changed the clinic from April to May to avoid the bad weather. Seemed like April, but I

No sport affords a greater field for observation and study than fly fishing, and it is the close attention paid to the minor happenings upon the stream that marks the finished angler.

-George M. L. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (1914)

think everyone enjoyed the experience.

The River Keepers are back in action with most beginning their water monitoring in May. Our Pine River at Aniwa Road team did our sampling on May 15, and the river seemed very healthy. We are blessed here in the central sands.

In Friday, May 16, I rode over to Poynette with Ira Giese to help Bob Haase teach several hundred grade school and middle school kids how to tie flies. Bob does a phenomenal job with these programs at several locations around the state. He has all the materials packaged in advance with directions for each fly. All us assistants have to do is sit at a table with our tools and teach one kid every 8-10 minutes non-stop for about 5 hours! That is a lot of kids fast, but they all seemed to enjoy it and were proud to leave with their fly in a little baggie. Bob is always looking for

volunteers, so if you would like to show kids how to tie, give him a call. We had another great turnout for the first stream work day of the year. This first work day is sometimes called the Chicago work day because we do it jointly with The Elliott Donnelley TU Chapter (EDTU) from Chicago. Jim Budelman, Chairman of the Trout and Salmon Foundation, was also there as were some of our friends from The Fox Valley Chapter. We were at the Chaffee Creek south of Wautoma. This is a beautiful place. If you haven't been there, look up the directions on our website and go check it out. Other than placing a few pilings for a bank cover, we did very little physical work. Instead, we got a lot of outdoor education from Shawn Sullivan, which is always enjoyable. Later that evening, John and Laura treated Jeff Goad and his EDTU members, and Jim Budelman to dinner at the restored mill house in Saxeville, on the Pine River. Shawn Sullivan and Steve DeVitt provided a very enjoyable slide presentation after dinner. EDTU and the Trout & Salmon Foundation have helped us a great deal through their labor, contributions and matching grants for stream restoration. The dinner was John and Laura's attempt at showing appreciation. It was a good time. Good weather is finally here. Enjoy!

**John Tucker**

## **RIVER KEEPERS**



The 2014 **CWTU River Keepers' training session** was held at Riverside Park in Waupaca on May 10. People came from all over the state to be trained in the water monitoring process. This is the ten year anniversary of our chapters first water monitoring efforts. At this time the River Keepers have 33 teams monitoring around 40 sites in Wisconsin.

## **Fly Fishing for Bone Fish on Ascension Bay, Mexico**

By John Tucker

While vacationing in Cancun the week of April 12, I made a last minute decision to try fly fishing for bone fish, an obvious "Bucket List" item. I contacted the Pesca Maya Lodge through the internet using my Kindle Fire, and luckily they had a boat and guides available on Thursday, April 17 for Ascension Bay, and would pick me up at my resort at 5 am. I booked it quickly.

Ascension Bay is a large bone fish area in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere in the Yucatan peninsula state of Quintana Roo, Mexico. The Pesca Maya Lodge on the bay is about 90 miles south of Cancun. Now 90 miles doesn't sound like much, but the last

hour of the drive, from the city of Tulum to the lodge, is on a narrow dirt jungle road full of pot holes and ruts with blind curves. We went into the tree limbs several times to barely miss oncoming trucks on a curve. Fortunately the lodge provided the van and driver. Unfortunately the driver seemed to be trying to win the Amazing Race. I survived but was close to being car sick. After about an hour, the driver stopped and pointed to a fishing boat about 10 yards from shore. He said to wade out and I would complete the trip to the lodge by boat.

The lodge was nicer than I expected in such a remote area of the Yucatan. Breakfast was quickly provided. Soon I was on my way with a license, two guides and two very nice SAGE 9 ft 9 wt fly rods.

Renting a boat and guides for one person is expensive, but this was a bucket list trip and you can't live forever. The upside was that I had the casting deck to myself for the full 7 hours of fishing. My guides were very helpful and friendly, but I can't remember their Mayan names. One poled the boat from the raised platform and spotted fish. The other stayed up front with me, pointed in the direction I should cast and told me how many feet the cast should be. He also boated and unhooked the fish. I have never had this 2 guide setup before, but it worked great.

It was a sunny windy morning and I made a lot of mistakes the first couple

of hours. It took me some time to learn how to make 40-45 foot casts in the wind. My accuracy was off at first and I spooked several fish, but I hooked up right away. I was totally unprepared for their speed and strength. I tried to turn the first one. A bad idea. I tried to slow the second one with my palm against the spinning reel. Another bad idea. Both fish snapped 10 pound leader almost instantly. I caught the third fish (pictured). Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks. It is amazing what a fish that size does to a 9 wt rod.

I caught two more fish that morning, and then there were no more fish to be seen. After a short lunch break, we went out into the middle of the bay to fish for Jack. After trying four locations, we gave up on the Jack and headed toward shore. Figuring that my day was about done, I asked one of the guides what would be considered a good day's catch for a client. He said 10 bone fish was real good. I felt lucky to have 3, but happily we were not done.

This time, instead of looking toward shore to spot fish in shallow water like he did during the morning, he went in close and looked out into the bay, where he said they were more likely to be feeding in the afternoon. He spotted one within a few minutes, and with the wind a little softer, I was able to hook up on the second cast without spooking the fish. Over the next hour and a half, I landed four

more bringing my total to 8 and the guide said it was time to go back. As I was reeling my line in, he said he need a few minutes to transfer gas into the main tank so I could get in a few more casts. On the third cast, I hooked up again and brought it to boat. Both guides were surprised that the strikes were coming so close together so they gave me a little more time. After 6 or 7 casts, I caught the tenth fish and it was time to go. The largest fish was about 14 inches. The lead guide said this was just average and a really big one would go 18 inches. All the fish, even the 12 inchers were tremendous fighters and I had a wonderful memorable day. By the way, the fly of choice was a “Gotcha” which I believe is a shrimp pattern.

My fishing day started with a 5 am pickup at my resort and ended with a 7 pm drop off. My catch was moderate to small in size but good in number. And I was proud that my shoulder held up well for 7 hours of casting with a 9 wt rod. A hot shower, a lovely dinner with Laura and a good night’s sleep in paradise.

I highly recommend that you make this trip if you are vacationing anywhere on the Rivera Maya from Cancun to Tulum. You can Google Pesca Maya lodge or Ascension Bay and find all the necessary information.

**John Tucker**

## APRIL CASTING AND KAYAK FISHING CLINIC



**Bob Haase demonstrates proper sit-on-top kayak technique**



**Dan Harmon III and David Seligman inspect Seligman’s S-O-T kayak rigged out for fly fishing. Note Seligman’s home built kayak transporter in background.**



A good crowd enjoys the cool and windy weather at the annual casting and kayak fishing clinic at Arthur Marble Park in Winneconne

## The Good Old Days

By Bill Flader

The Good Old Days are NOW. Have you heard that expression used to describe the excellent trout fishing we enjoy these days in Wisconsin and neighboring States?

Changing land-use patterns, stream improvement work, increased public access, catch and release ethic, and special regs all contribute.

So, after a productive early start to the 2009 season in NE Iowa and SW Wisconsin, this writer wondered what it would take, as a demonstration of the extensive resources available to trout fishers, to catch at least one trout in as many streams as possible. The nice round number of 100 seemed reasonable, and the quest began.

Realizing it would require fishing waters new to the writer, three essential map books were assembled: *Wisconsin Atlas and Gazetteer*, Wis. Trout regs pamphlet, and *Map Guide to Improved Trout Waters of Wisconsin* by Todd Hanson. In addition, an Iowa Trout Fishing Guide (folded map of NE Iowa with trout

waters overprinted in color) and Jene Hughes' book, *Iowa Trout Streams* were consulted. Hanson's book proved invaluable in showing public lands and location of access corridors, and secondarily where improvement had been done in past years.

Where no public access was shown, fishing was necessarily done near bridges, with some judicious and stealthy straying up or downstream at times. On a few occasions, upon discovery by the landowner, permission was granted after a brief explanation of what I was up to. One time, after being told "there are some big fish in that pool," the first fish hooked was a leaping 16" brown, so it was on to the next stream. Permission to fish several small creeks on large tracts of private land was readily granted after establishing a relationship and promising C&R. Before each foray out (47 days fished between February 6 to July 27) a plan was hatched to fish a geographic grouping of waters to minimize driving time. (On one day trout were caught in 8 of 9 streams fished.) Each day thus became an adventure, with a lot of exploring and opportunities to consider, meeting some interesting people in the process. For example, on leaving a Westby motel in the Driftless area one morning, a Pennsylvania fly fisher who had fished widely, proclaimed SW Wisconsin "the best trout fishing east of the Mississippi." I also found new waters to return to some

day...something to look forward to.

Now for some relevant data: In addition to the 100 streams, 37 more were fished unsuccessfully, 47 of the 100 were new to the angler. Fish were caught in 4 Iowa counties, 1 in the UP, and 17 in Wisconsin.

Surprisingly, in 25% of streams at least one fish caught was a brookie. All fishing was with a 2 wt. fly rod, and usually on scuds or nymphs (most often a 'fladermouse') below an indicator.

In this writer's 60-plus years of trout fishing, a lot has changed, including his main haunt as a youth, the Onion River in Sheboygan County, once dependent on stocking, now producing wild browns after years of effort on the part of many. You may disagree, but it is hard not to conclude that when it comes to trout fishing opportunities in our region, THE GOOD OLD DAYS ARE NOW.

*(Bill Flader is a member of SWTU and lives in Madison, WI)*