

# 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)**

**February 2014**

**Prez Sez**

**February 2014**

Not a whole lot to talk about but the weather and we have all done enough of that. My river is frozen over so there won't be much fishing for me to talk about for awhile.

TroutFest was very successful again. Thank you Bob Smaglik for organizing the event, thank you volunteers, and thank all of you who attended.

Last month we began our first Work Day Fund Drive. The contributions will be used strictly for work improving trout streams in our chapter boundaries. These donations supplement matching grant monies, but without the restrictions that come with the grants. Thank you to all who have made your donation. We are adding a Work Day Fund contribution form to our web site. You can print this one page document and send it in with your donation at any time. It will be there year around.

There are several things going on, and they seem to be moving slowly. Our TU license plate bill is still pending but is looking promising. The Senate groundwater bill has yet to move to the floor for final vote. This is SB302, known by some as the Kedzie bill. We do NOT want it to pass. Please contact your state Senator and request a NO vote. New Trout regulations are being written. This is a 2 year process so the changes will be out for 2016.

The new regs are supposed to be more friendly. Time will tell.

Three more of our members have attended the River Alliance Advocacy training program. That makes six of us. It is time to come out of the Igloo and do some more advocating.

**John Tucker**

### **Rick Fahrenkrug Recognized By State Water Monitoring Organization**

Congratulations to CWTU River Keeper Rick Fahrenkrug for being selected as the 2014 Wisconsin Stream Monitoring Volunteer Of The Year. The award was presented at the annual Volunteer Stream Monitoring Symposium, held at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point on February 14 and 15.

The presenter, Kris Stepenuck, Water Action Volunteers Stream Monitoring Program Director, had this to say about Rick.

Rick Fahrenkrug with the Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited River Keepers. Rick has volunteered his time as a co-leader of this program for the past five years. The River Keepers 35 sites in multiple counties in and around the Fox Valley. He has dedicated thousands of hours helping to energize this program. His efforts have included securing two grants, facilitating a middle school monitoring project, developing (and

presenting on multiple occasions) a portable display to recruit volunteers and to share the River Keepers' story, and working with an individual landowner to improve in-stream habitat after monitoring results sparked the landowners' interest in doing so. Nominator John Gremmer noted one of Rick's strengths is his personal relations with the volunteer monitors. The respect these people have for his efforts was evident in the letters of support received for his nomination.

**John Gremmer**

### **CWTU River Keepers To Kick Off 10th Year on April 22**

Yes, the River Keepers have been serving as advocates and monitors for central Wisconsin streams for the last nine years and are about to start their tenth. Rick Fahrenkrug and I have had a busy winter promoting the River Keepers at events like FVTU's Cabin Fever Day, the State TU Banquet, and TroutFest '14. Equipment for 2014 is being ordered and our goal is to add six new teams in 2014.

Our organizational meeting will be held at the Fin 'N Feather at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, April 22. Former CWTU scholarship recipient Mike Shupryt who is now the DNR's Streams & Rivers Monitoring Technical Lead, will present a short program on the

value of water monitoring volunteers. During the one hour meeting new teams will be assembled, old teams may pick up some members, and equipment needs will be addressed. Join the River Keepers today! Anyone interested in becoming a River Keeper should contact me at [920-582-7802](tel:920-582-7802), or [jgremmer@charter.net](mailto:jgremmer@charter.net), or Rick Fahrenkrug at [920-725-0255](tel:920-725-0255), or [rfahr07@gmail.com](mailto:rfahr07@gmail.com).

### **Greetings from Julie Nieland**

*Julie Nieland is one of our past UW-O graduate scholarship students.*

*Recently I received this message from her. The message speaks well for Julie, CWTU, and our scholarship program.*

**John Gremmer**

Hi John,

How are you? I hope all is well in Wisconsin. Hopefully everyone is getting in some fly tying to prepare for the upcoming trout season. I realize it has been quite some time since you've heard from or seen me. I do have a good reason though: I am now living in Massachusetts on Cape Cod and am working as a contractor for the National Marine Fisheries Service. I've been looking at the impacts of dams on Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot River in Maine (a modeling project that is comparable to my Master's research at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens

Point, which was about the sustainability of lake trout fisheries in Lake Superior). I've also been analyzing data to help assess the abundance and condition of several fish stocks, including Atlantic mackerel and black sea bass. Working on marine species seems like a different world most of the time, but it has been very interesting. San

I wanted to write you to give you an update but also to let you know that I have switched my Trout Unlimited membership to a local chapter. My husband and I have been scouting out rivers near our house and have already fished one river with lots of success catching native brook trout. We're looking forward to getting more involved in our area, meeting new people, and learning some fun fishing spots.

Many thanks to you and the members of the Central Wisconsin Chapter for getting me interested in trout fishing; for teaching me about trout habitat, stream rehabilitation, fly tying, and so much more; and, especially, for making me feel welcome. I think of you all often and have really enjoyed keeping up with the events, etc. via the Brookie News. I wish the chapter and its members the best of luck in all of their endeavors, and I hope to catch up with you again on a visit back to Wisconsin in the future.

Sincerely,  
Julie Nieland

## **Troutfest 2014**

*(Photos by John Gremmer)*

And a note of thanks from Sara Hans:

Hi John,

Thank you for organizing such a wonderful and educational day on Saturday.

It was a thrill to come home and show my husband and son my handmade flies! They were impressed. :-)

I greatly appreciate you adding me to the CWTU mailing list. The members are very welcoming and I know that I will enjoy attending the events.

Warm regards,

Sara



**CWTU Board member Laura Tucker prepares fruit cups for CWTU's TroutFest '14 participants**



**Rich Mlodzik helps a young man tie a fly at the youth tying table at TroutFest '14.**



**Tim Landwehr, TightLines Fly Fishing Company, presents a program at Troutfest '14**



**Dr. Guy Jensen puts the finishing touches on one of his original flies at TroutFest '14.**



**Artist Charles Mitchell, Clay Parmley, and his dad Wayne Parmley enjoyed TroutFest '14 activities.**

## Los Roques, Venezuela

Considering a trip to Venezuela? Better read what our U. S. embassy has to say about visiting Venezuela. They have issued a “Travel Warning”, and say that Venezuela has one of the highest homicide rates in the

world, especially in and around Caracas, which is where our plane landed. Any embassy official traveling from the airport into Caracas after dark is required to ride in an armored vehicle.

After reading what our Embassy had to say, I was a little concerned about our safety, so I called our travel consultant at Frontiers International Travel. She assured me that Frontiers would handle everything safely. And, they did!

Our trip through Tight Lines in De Pere consisted of Tim Landwehr, owner of tight Lines, Ryan Vartanian, a computer programming guru from Madison, Jim Wiersma, a retired chemistry professor from UWGB, Mac and Ron, two doctors from Chicago, Jim, a real estate owner from Chicago, and myself. It was like old home week, getting together, as all of us except Jim from Chicago had fished together last winter on Andros Island in the Bahamas.

Venezuela may have the best bonefishing in the world, but I would never recommend going there on your own. Frontiers hired JonJac, a transportation company that met us at the airport as soon as we got through customs. He herded us into his large van with drapes covering most windows, and drove us safely through the very dangerous and crowded city for the 15 minute ride to our overnight stay at the beautiful and new Marriott Playa Grande.

As we drove to our hotel, there were police and national guard troops, with machine guns, stationed at many locations. I felt safe, but only because of the excellent work done by JonJac, our transportation company. Ryan stepped out of the hotel, and one of the hotel people immediately stopped him and said, “Very dangerous. Do not go out on the street, away from the hotel!”

Our flight to Los Roques took us to an entirely different world, one of beautiful beaches, reefs, and friendly people where we felt safe for our entire stay.



I fished before breakfast every morning. Two mornings, I fished alongside a doctor from Venice, Italy. He has a friend who lives near Caracas, and he has been coming to Los Roques for four years. He said that he is very concerned for this country. He said there are often long lines for commodities like sugar, and that killings and violence are commonplace. (The week before we left for our trip, the big news on Good Morning America was that Miss Venezuela and her companion had been shot and killed after their car got a flat tire in Caracas.)

On to the fishing: The owner of Sight Cast in Los Roques, who we were booked with, says it is the best bonefishing in the world. He may be correct. As a relative newby to bonefishing, I am not in a position to judge. However, if seeing a school of 200-500 bonefish is not common elsewhere (as I believe it is not!), he may be correct. Now, do not be misled, that is not a common occurrence, but it did happen. Again, like they say in turkey hunting, "Roasted isn't roasted!" Those fish tailing on the pancake flats, in 4-8 inches of water are VERY spooky. Start with fish that blow up if you cast too close, and turtle grass that will swallow your fly if it is allowed to settle, and you have a recipe for significant frustration and occasional success!

My favorite stretches to fish were the reef edges that had white sand where even I could see the bonefish. The eyes of the

guides were incredible. "Cast one o'clock, long cast" or "cast, 20 feet. There. So you see the fish?" Usually, my answer would be, "No". Sometimes, "Yes." I think the ability to see the bonefish against all backgrounds is gained only with a lot of experience. I am not there yet. Because two people shared a guide, 1/2 of the time, I fished on my own. Although I did see and catch fish on my own, I fell far behind what Tim, Ryan, and Jim, were able to see, with their greater experience.

One of the benefits of this location was the average size of the Bonefish, which probably run an average of 2 pounds heavier than many other locations. I think everyone caught numerous fish up to 5 pounds and a fair number of up to 7 pounds.

Unfortunately, both Ron and I ended up with a stomach flu, which sidelined us for a little while. I missed one afternoon of fishing, and spent 18 hours flat on my back, some in the boat, and some in my room. By the next morning, I was back to 80%, and improved throughout the next day.

Tarpon and Permit were also mentioned as possible fish to catch on this trip. Usually that is just false advertising. However, this trip was different! Most mornings, Tarpon put on a spectacular feeding display right in front of our lodging. I got up early every morning and fished before breakfast.

However, the Tarpon were a little slow in getting going in the morning. By the time we got out fishing around 8 am, the Tarpon were warming up. There were many, many millions of 1 1/2 to 2 inch minnows in huge baitfish balls close to shore. The Tarpon would come up through these clouds of baitfish, scattering minnows into the air in huge showers. Meanwhile, large numbers of Brown Pelicans were crashing into the clouds of minnows with their beaks open. They would then drain out the water, swallow the minnows. and get ready to do it

all over again. It all made for a visual and auditory overload that I have tried to stamp permanently into my memory. Other birds that I enjoyed watching were the Boobys and Man-O'-War Birds, also called Frigate-Birds. At times, we could see up to a dozen Tarpon crashing the minnows in one location. And, I could see this happening in other locations, as I looked up and down the shoreline. What a sight!! Twenty to sixty pound Tarpon slashing out of the water, baitfish flying everywhere in an effort to escape. Our fly of choice was a size 2 Gummy Minnow, which resembled the little minnows the Tarpon were feeding on. What is the chance that a Tarpon would grab that single, small, fly, when it had millions of the real thing to feed on? Within the first hour, I hooked what the guide said was a 60 pound Tarpon!! It made 4 spectacular leaps and made my trip - until it threw the hook. Because the Tarpon's mouth is so hard, it is very hard to get a good hookset. Tim says the average ratio is about 10 hook-ups for each Tarpon landed. I "jumped" a Tarpon each of the first three mornings, and hooked a total of five in the course of the trip, with none being landed. Still, what a thrill, to have one of those beautiful, silvery, fish on for even a short while. Of the seven of us in the group, only Tim and Ryan were able to bring a Tarpon to the



boat. Tim and I were fishing together the day he landed his Tarpon, and I was able to get a few pictures.

One of the ultimate goals in salt water fishing is to catch a Grand Slam: Bonefish, Tarpon, and Permit in the same day. Bonefish, were no problem, as we caught those everyday, after spending a few hours chasing the Tarpon. Of the three, the Permit is the toughest. They are very spooky, and not always willing to take a fly, even when everything seems perfect. Tim said he has cast to probably 500 Permit, and has landed two. While casting for Tarpon the last morning, I actually hooked and landed a Permit. I can take no credit for it, as it took no special skill, something that is normally required to catch a Permit. It was a small Permit, only about a foot long. However, it was a Permit, and I now have that box checked off on my life list of fish caught.



Amazingly enough, later in the day, I saw a school of Permit when I was Bonefishing, and I actually caught a second one out of that school. I was the only one on the trip lucky enough to catch a Permit.

Would I go again? Absolutely! However, only if the airline prices come down. The government is so corrupt or inefficient (possibly both) that they owe the airlines huge sums of money. (One of the people on Los Roques said it is around \$60,000,000.) Apparently the airlines are able to collect some of the fares, and are supposed to pay part of it back to the airlines, which they have not done. Because

the airlines do not want to give up the routes, they keep flying, but also keep raising the fares. The owner of Sight Cast said his business is down 60-70%. My “new friend” from Italy said Los Roques is usually bustling with tourists, and this last week it was very quiet. The most interesting thing from this trip will be to watch Venezuela and see if the country is able to pull itself out of the downward spiral that it is currently in. I hope for everyone that its problems get corrected.



For you fly fishing junkies: the best flies for me were: Bonefish - Pop's Bonefish Bitters on the pancake flats, Spawning Gotchas, Bully Special, and Midnight Mullet; Tarpon - Size 2 Gummy Minnow, preferably with about a 2/0 tarpon hook; Permit - Midnight Mullet. All in all, another great trip with a fun group of guys. Hope we can travel to some far off fishing destination together again.

**Ira Giese**

## Brookie News Articles and Features

Members and friends of CWTU are encouraged to submit articles, notices, and photos for publication in the Brookie News. Contact the editor at [Seligmand@gmail.com](mailto:Seligmand@gmail.com).

## League of Conservation Voters Lobby Day



CWTU was represented at the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters Annual Lobby Day on February 11 by (from left: Sue Gremmer, Bob Haase, Lil Fahrenkrug, and Rick Fahrenkrug. John Gremmer attended and took this picture. Participants met with their Senators and Representatives and lobbied on the topics of high capacity wells, local control of health and welfare issues, and frac sand mining. Over 300 environmentalists attended the event. Our CWTU representatives thought it was a worthwhile event and they enjoyed the whole day.

## Wisconsin State Council Banquet



CWTU River Keepers Jim Murphy and John Gremmer are shown at the February 1, State Council Banquet in Oshkosh. The two remarked that many different chapters expressed interest in our unique program and some will attend our April training day for River Keepers. People who want to get involved with the CWTU River Keepers should contact John at [920-582-7802](tel:920-582-7802).

