



Arrowhead Fly Angler

December 2012

www.arrowheadflyfishers.com



What's up? At a glance

December 18, 2012

Holiday Banquet at Blackwoods in Proctor. Beginning at 6 pm.

January 26, 2013

Fly tying at the Proctor Community Center. From 9am-noon.

February 9th, 2013

Fly tying at the Proctor Community Center. From 9am-noon.

March 9th, 2013

Casting Instruction-event at Collage of St. Scholastica. Burns Wellness Center from noon to 6pm.

March, 22-24th 2013

Great waters Expo. Blaine MN

Spring, 2013

Beaver dam removal for the UsKaBwanka River.

November 1st-3rd, 2013

Arrowhead Fly Fishers 8th Annual Fall Steelhead Rendezvous. Location: Brule River, WI.

Guess where!

Each newsletter there will be a photo from a club member. You try to guess where it was taken. There will be a prize for who guesses correctly first.

email to: Arrowheadflyfishers@aol.com

Didn't guess the photo location? You can still contribute by emailing

your photo for the contest. Congratulations to Doug Mroz for guessing the last issue's photo. Brule river during the Steelhead Rendezvous. He even guessed the exact crossing!

submitted photos are available for use by the Arrowhead Fly Angler and Arrowhead Fly Fishers club



Volume 23 Issue V email edition.

Guess where!.....	1
AFF News.....	2
AFF Fall Steelhead Rendezvous.....	4
From the banks of the Midway.....	5

Casting Corner.....	6
Who we are.....	7

Arrowhead Fly Fishers Fall Banquet

The Arrowhead Fly Fishers Fall Banquet was held on Saturday October 6, 2012. The Fall Banquet was held at the Proctor Community Center and



the chili feed was the hit of the evening. A small gathering was present but a good time was had by all. Kathy Hannon and Bob Wilke organized the event with Bob providing the award winning Chili (Bob's Chili had received an award). Kathy had the creative insight to use paper table runners and a few crayons at each table. People had fun drawing flies and fish and what ever else came to mind. The Fall elections were held with new officers for the board elected for 2013 nominated and voted on. We will have new board members representing the club who will continue the volunteerism spirit of creating an active club.

by: Todd Heggstad

Board of Directors Update

- A Board meeting was held on November 12th, 2012.
- New officers elected: **Vice President**- Kathy Lansing; **Treasurer**- Jim Arndt; **Conservation/ Education**- John Connolly; **Membership** - Mary Shaw; **Banquet director** position – the position is still vacant. Bob Shaw volunteered to be the **librarian** (non- board position).
- The Upper Midwest Council president, Todd Heggstad spoke of the newly formed International Federation of Fly Fishers council. And reported on the council's first general meeting in November at Stevens Point Wisconsin. President Heggstad asked for a board member of the AFF to join the Upper Midwest Board. Larry Zelenz volunteered to fill the position.
- The Uskabwanka river project was updated to board members.

Upper Midwest Council Update

The Upper Midwest Council (UMC) held its first Board of Directors meeting in Steven's Point, WI in early November 2012. The council which comprises the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Northern Illinois discussed the organization of education events in support of the various FFF clubs and the collective membership. Education efforts for fly casting and fly tying are in the works for bringing members together. The UMC has recently supported a conservation project to genetically map the DNA of Brook Trout from the central Wisconsin area. It is thought that a population of Brook Trout deep in the woods of central Wisconsin might represent a strain of fish from pre-glacial times. This project is a joint project between the FFF national organization and the council.

by: Todd Heggstad

A Call for Action on Hometown streams

After a long, dry summer we have had a long, relatively dry fall and now winter is locking in with lake and stream levels near record lows, not just in the Arrowhead, but also throughout the country. Critically low water levels can be a real threat to trout survival during the winter. However, even in the midst of a drought a significant threat to area streams still remains as a remnant of the catastrophic flood last June. County and Municipal agencies as well as private landowners are lining up the dollars to move ahead with stream “repairs” to the impacted stream beds. Many people in Duluth, including the City Government, are not aware that these are trout streams that flow through the urban hillsides and much needs to be done to increase awareness and give these gems the respect and proper treatment that they deserve. Unfortunately many folks began “repairs” prior to consultation with the proper authorities (private land owners and even some city agencies may not have been aware that work in designated trout streams needs DNR permitting, even on private land) and removed large woody debris and cut down bank stabilizing trees that are important components to a healthy trout stream. As long as it doesn’t threaten infrastructure, like bridges and culverts, LEAVE THE WOOD! The threat the drought brings to these streams is not something we can do much about. How we manage the post flood activities on banks and in the streambeds is something that should be planned with the fish in mind.

These streams unfortunately play the strange dual roll of being managed as trout habitat and as an important element of Duluth’s storm water system. Hopefully the “clean up and repair” will strike a balance that is not detrimental to the fish. There are a number of instances of dams and impassable culverts that were blown out by the flood that actually provide an opportunity to improve the trout habitat of some streams. The Chester Bowl dam is one example. The water impounded by the dam was too warm for cold water fish and downstream of the pond fish survival was poor. It’s gone. What will replace it and how will that affect the stream as a trout fishery? You have a chance to make your voice heard at a public meeting regarding the Chester Bowl on Tuesday, December 11 (see below)

As the work goes forward on these streams, anglers must be sure to make their voices heard. The AFF joins with local chapters of TU and the Izaak Walton League as we all share in this concern and need to speak out to everyone that will listen about the value of these streams to fishermen. They provide economic, environmental and social benefits to the community when they are healthy and support good fish populations. Speak up for the fish!

by: Larry Zelenz

Public Meeting: Chester Creek within Chester Bowl

We want your input!

WHAT: The City of Duluth is exploring options to repair, restore, and enhance Chester Creek within Chester Bowl. Get involved by attending this meeting and providing comments.

WHEN: Tuesday, December 11, 2012 from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

WHERE: Duluth Police Department Conference Room, 2030 N. Arlington Avenue

For more information contact Chris Kleist, City of Duluth, ckleist@duluthmn.gov or 218.355.0598

Formal comments are preferred via email or in writing and can be submitted to Chris and are respectfully requested by December 28, 2102.

2012 AFF Fall Steelhead Rendezvous November 2nd to 4th, 2012



The Arrowhead Fly Fishers Steelhead Rendezvous had a full house again for 2012. The river was flowing in the low 120's (cfs). The weather was rather mild for November. With temperatures in the mid thirties and light wind, the fishing was enjoyable. Randy and the gang put together another fabulous event. Great food and comrade are the signature benefits of the Rendezvous. Some fish were landed. It seemed the indicator nymph rig was the ticket for the weekend. The crowds were low and it was easy to find a good hole to fish. Being still green to the sport of steelheading, I went with a crew early on Saturday morning with the chant " first

light - first bite" headlights guiding the way. We found our hole unoccupied and since temperatures were mild we hardly had any ice in the guides of our rods.

We returned to the steelhead headquarters to eat a late breakfast and found the LSD steelhead crew (latter day steelheaders) just beginning to suit up for the day. We were open to their preaching of late fall steelhead timing and were instantly converts. We headed out for a late morning outing followed up with lunch (beer and burgers) in Iron River, capped by a nice late afternoon nap. The nap helped fuel us for the wonderful dinner and drinks that night. Dinner was topped off



with the traditional St. Rose apple pies and a healthy side of B.S. and ribbing by the other rendezvous participants. The next morning, having woken up later than the previous day, we found a hearty breakfast waiting. It was discovered that the local wildlife enjoyed the mild November temperatures also. Randy asked if we had seen a bear with "red lips"? I thought maybe it had gotten into someone's lipstick, but found out it sampled the remaining spaghetti sauce and other delights that were in the coolers outside the cabin that night. Hmm I wonder when

they go to sleep for the winter. After breakfast we made lunches and set out for a long hardcore day. We had a steelhead newbie with us that was anxious to hook one of these elusive fish he had heard tales of. So, we had to get him fishing fast to calm his nerves. We dropped him off at a mediocre hole with the instructions, we will be fishing the holes above you, if you get one yell "fish-on" and we will run down and help you net it. I began my walking the trail up stream, only to hear " I got one, I got one". Putting my rod against a tree and running down the trail two blocks or so, I see the happy angler holding up a smolt and smiling. He sees me and asked " is this what they call a smolt?". Yes, I replied, catching my breath, and putting my net away, for some reason true steelheaders don't count those, I replied. We fished hard the rest of the day, including a hole we thought hadn't been fished that day, to find out later two nice steelhead were taken from the hole. And the very satisfied fly fishers had just left about ten minutes before our arrival. This made us think a courtesy "I just caught all the fish in this hole ten minutes ago" signal should be used by all Rendezvous participants next year!



by: Paul Bartlam

From the Banks of the Midway ...

Quite a while ago I read a paperback entitled Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. Too many years and too many books have passed for me to remember much about the book, but I do recall the author describing two different approaches to motorcycle maintenance -- the practical, mechanical, analytic approach contrasted with a more subjective or emotional attachment to the machine.

I was thinking about the book's title last month while sitting on the deer stand; I never know what will pop into my mind while sitting for hours on end. I thought I might write a book titled Zen and the Art of Deer Hunting (or Trout Fishing). If I ever had enough energy or discipline to actually write a book, I would discuss the scientific / analytic deer hunter / fisherman with the other type -- me.

Many of the deer hunters I know are analysts. They have trail cameras scattered throughout the woods. They study lunar calendars to determine when that big buck's hormones are raging. They know the ballistics of their deer rifles and have a backpack full of bleat, grunt, and wheeze calls and a set of rattling antlers. They can sit for days over a scrape line because they have patterned a big buck that has eluded them for the past two years. They have a trophy room full of antlers.

My type of hunter, on the other hand, takes a much more nonchalant approach. I go hunting when I can go, regardless of what the lunar cycle says. I have a severe case of techno phobia and do not own a trail camera. I tried rattling / grunting / bleating once and felt like a complete fool. I usually shoot does or tiny bucks, which is the reason our hunting camp is called Little Buck Lodge.

My fishing follows the same pattern. I try to pay attention to the latest fly patterns, but

usually end up using the same half dozen patterns all season. I can't get motivated to by the latest large arbor reel because it would mean I have to retire my trusty Pflueger Medalist to the tackle drawer.

I've tried to identify why this is and have come up with a number of theories.

During last season I left the deer camp in the morning with this thought -- if I'm lucky I'll get a deer, but if I'm really lucky I won't see a thing. This newer attitude is, I believe, a result of creaky knees and wheezing lungs. Last year I shot a big buck and discovered to my chagrin that I could hardly drag it for more than 5 yards without gasping for breath, and I'd like to think that I'm in reasonable shape. So this year, when I was sneaking around the thickest tangle next to a beaver dam, I didn't think "I'll bet there's a big buck lurking around here." Instead, what kept going through my mind is "My goodness, if I get a deer in this stuff I'll never get it out without suffering a heart attack."

Another theory is that the overall experience of a day I spend in the woods or on the water has become far more important than shooting a buck or catching a fish. The fishing and hunting just gives me an excuse to be in the woods. Last month my youngest son Aaron joined Nathan and me at the deer shack; Aaron hadn't been there for 12 years. The time we spent together was far more important than actually shooting a deer, although Aaron went back to Montana with a couple coolers full of venison. That was just icing on an already delicious cake.

Finally, I have discovered that luck plays such a large part of any success I have that I shy away from becoming too wrapped up a quest to become an "expert" shooter or fisherman. A friend of mine recently handed me a book about Alaska. The author made the interesting observation that steelhead fishing

is 20 percent skill and luck and 80 percent timing. That formula certainly holds true for me, and not just in steelheading. One of the maddening aspects of deer hunting is that I can sit for hours on a stand, go back to the camp to warm up, and come back a half hour later only to find the snow around my stand covered with deer tracks. If I sleep in the next day, figuring to ambush a deer around noon since that's when they fooled me yesterday, I'll spook three or four on the way to my spot, where I should have been since sunrise. You get the picture.

Of course, what keeps me going is that on rare occasions everything does come together in such a perfect and beautiful way that I forget all about my frustrations. Watching that big buck moving down the trail toward me, holding on for dear life as that big steelhead tail dances across a pool, swinging my double on that big partridge and actually seeing it fall -- when those moments happen all of life's pettiness and problems melt away, those few seconds get burned into my memory, and I can relive those joys over and over again.



Phil Johnson, is a bamboo rod maker and secretary for the Arrowhead Fly Fishers.

Phil can be reached at: discophil61@gmail.com

Casting corner

The Back Cast, Part 2

In the AFF newsletter one year ago I wrote about the mechanics of the back cast. The basic premise was that a good back cast is the foundation of a good forward cast. The back cast when done properly leads to a tight loop. But the back cast can also be a very useful cast when fishing. The back cast can be used on the water when wade fishing or in a drift boat. A well placed back cast can be just as effective as a forward cast in delivering a fly to its intended target. The use of the back cast when fishing is the subject of this article.

When river fishing, casting is sometimes the graceful forward and back casting motion like in the River Runs Though It. But the reality of fly fishing is that much of the casting is a series of upstream water loaded casts to begin a new drift. Imagine being knee deep in the water with the river current moving from your right to the left (or perhaps from the east to the west). As you cast your fly, it settles on the water and begins its drift, taken by the current downstream. As the fly ends the drift it is there on the dangle with the line straight down stream with the current. Sometimes on the dangle a trout will rise and take the fly. Sometimes as you strip in line to ready the cast a trout will take the fly. If not, the rod motion, a back cast motion, is begun by creating a bend in the rod and sending the fly upstream to begin another drift. Adding to the cast is the water tension on the fly line as it lays in the water and contributes to the loading of the rod for the casting of the line upstream. This can be a back cast with the thumb of the casting hand leading the way. This cast begins with a pulling motion but with no rotation of the rod until the rod passes the body. The cast begins with all that is in the water is the leader. Then there is an accelerating rotation of the rod in the intended direction ending with a stop. The fly line is propelled with the fly for another upstream drift. A back cast in one single motion. No back and forth. Just fly fishing in its simplicity and keeping the fly in the water where the fish are.

In the second circumstance, fly fishing from a drift boat, the back cast is not an option, it is a necessity. Whether fishing from the bow or stern of a drift boat you will be casting to the port or starboard bank of the river during the float. Some of the time you will be able to use your usual rod hand side back and forth casting motion. But at other times your usual casting stroke will be right over the middle of the boat and the rower. That is when use of a back cast can be helpful. There can be other casts used, such as an off shoulder cast, which will also keep the line and hook

over the end of the boat. But the back cast can be an effective way to present the fly.

Once again using your imagination, picture yourself in a drift boat and having to cast off the stern of the boat and not wanting to cast over the middle of the boat. Your strategy is to make a forward cast in the opposite direction and then when ready deliver the back cast toward the intended target. The back cast is a deliberate presentation cast and can be combined with shooting line to add distance. It's a safe, effective cast that keeps you in the game by getting your fly where you want it to be.

The key to making this drift boat back cast is your practice time. Practicing the back cast can be done by making your back cast and letting it fall to the ground. The object is to have the fly line fully unroll and straight. Practice until you can achieve a straight lying cast and then slip more and more line to add distance. Developing your back cast in this way will make your overall casting better and add to your fly fishing casting skills.



Todd Heggstad has been a certified casting instructor since 2010. Todd is the Treasurer of the AFF, and President of the Upper Midwest FFF Council. Todd can be reached at theggstad57@gmail.com

Remember the AFF has 5 and 6 wt. rods for members to check out for a 2 week period by placement of a deposit. Contact any board member for details.

If you have a casting question email it to:

Arrowheadflyfishers@aol.com

Who we are

The Arrowhead Fly Fishers is a group of men and women dedicated to promoting fly angling of all types and to preserving fisheries throughout the Arrowhead region.

What we offer:

- Interesting meeting topics
- Formal casting instruction
- Stream improvement projects
- Group fishing adventures
- Fly tying sessions
- Fellowship and Fun



Board of Directors

President: Karl Kaufman 218-879-9492 jkk Kaufman@mchsi.com

Vice President: Larry Zelenz 507-382-7793
larry.zelenz@gmail.com

Secretary: Phil Johnson 218-879-3206
discophil61@gmail.com

Treasurer: Todd Heggstad 218-310-9182 Theggstad57@gmail.com

Banquet Director: OPEN

Publications Director: Paul Bartlam 218-390-0764 pbartlam@aol.com

Membership Director: Kathy Lansing 218-310-0855 naturegirl669@gmail.com

Conservation/Education Director: Laura Jensen 218-590-6249 jens0619@gmail.com



"We may say of angling as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries: 'Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did'; and so, if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling."

-Izaak Walton

Arrowhead Fly Fishers Membership Form

Dues are payable in January

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Membership Type:

Individual—\$15

Family—\$20

New Member

Renewing Member

Return to: Arrowhead Fly Fishers 209

Snively Rd.

Duluth, MN. 55803



Arrowhead Fly Fishers

209 Snively Rd.

Duluth, MN. 55803