

STEELHEAD NEWS

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www.steelheaders.org

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Knife River Majesty by C. Haberman

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Lake Superior Steelhead Association

PO Box 16034
Duluth, MN 55816-0034

LSSA's Mission:

For these reasons and more, the Lake Superior Steelhead Association exists: to protect our rivers and fish; to help preserve Lake Superior and its bounty; to learn more about the resources we enjoy and foster discussion, research and sound fisheries management practices; to educate anglers and the public about all these things. The LSSA has taken all these tasks upon its shoulders. These issues are too important to leave to chance or the vagaries of bureaucracies and politics. Our mission is to protect and improve the cold water fishery of the Lake Superior region and to bring various groups of anglers together in an atmosphere of friendship, so they can work for their and the resources common good.

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*Past LSSA Presidents

Message from the President

By Mike Pitan

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Mike Pitan and I was elected President of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association at the banquet in April. I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you all and introduce myself. Most importantly, I wanted to take this opportunity to give thanks to Craig Wilson for his service as President of our organization. Craig possesses a unique skill set that, combined with his drive, passion, and vision for the fishery, are why we have made the leaps we have during his tenure. This is exemplified by his contributions in getting the LSOHC grants, resulting in the successful rehabilitation of multiple problem areas on the Knife. Craig played a pivotal roll as well in establishing the steelhead relocation program. Craig was also never afraid to call out or confront other organizations, environmental agencies, or politicians on matters if the club deemed it necessary. As a passionate steelheader and advocate for the fishery, I feel I can speak for anyone who enjoys our North Shore steelhead in saying how grateful I am for Craig's service as our

fishery would not be nearly what it is today without him. I myself first got in to steelhead fishing about ten years ago as a new angling challenge during college at UMD. In that time, I have developed a deep passion and respect for these fish which ultimately led me to the LSSA. Once I joined the board, my eyes started opening to the very real threats the fishery faces as well as how delicate it is. I am very humbled to have the opportunity to become more involved and drive positive change in our special fishery and will do my best to fill Craig's shoes. A couple of the key issues that will be most important to pursue revolve around acquiring additional LSOHC grants to build upon the incredible grant work already completed, protecting our fish from harmful fishing practices and seasons, maintaining the no kill on wild fish, and ensuring there is a sustainable put and take fishery now that the French River hatchery is closed. We have come a long way in the last decade and I look forward to the LSSA building upon the great things we have done so far.



Mike Pitan cradling a North Shore steelhead.



News and Notes

Compiled by Scott Thorpe

Knife River Clean Up

By Kevin J. Bovee

Over the spring and summer of 2016, the LSSA board discussed having a clean-up session for the Knife River. The reasoning was that the Knife receives a lot of fishing pressure each spring and since the LSSA has made a very considerable effort to improve the fishing conditions, it only made sense to give something back to the stream and local residents by having a streamside clean up session. Every weekend that we picked over the summer of 2016 was rained out and once we got into fall, the idea was put on the back-burner.

The idea resurfaced in 2017 and the Saturday of May 6 was scheduled as the day. We had a sign-up sheet at the banquet but

(continued next page)



Ken Nelson and his son David fishing in the early 70's.



Post Card From The Past.

From the Editor

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to this issue. The vintage photo is always popular. This photo of Ken Nelson and his son David comes by way of Ken's daughter in law, whose name I have lost! The image immediately brought back many memories. As a teenager, fishing with my brother and father on the Split Rock, we would often meet Ken and his young bride Marsha as they fished their way up to the barrier pool. Ken was a former resident of Duluth and knew ten time more about steelhead than us young boys. Of course, I also had a crush on the beautiful Marsha. I am fairly certain the photograph was taken on the Split Rock.

Thanks also to Dave Olson for his Brule Opener story and photographs, Kevin Bovee, Craig Wilson, Mike Pitan for material and Charles Haberman for his cover photo. I am always in need of articles. Text me at 612-669-9601 or e-mail me with articles and photos at scott@scottthorpeflyfishing.com. This will be the last issue until fall. By the time you read this, I will be up in Alaska for the summer, swatting mosquitos and guiding. The first fish we will focus on will be king salmon. The run in the Talachulitna River is only about 4000 kings, spread over 44 miles of wter, so the fishing is challenging, especially with a fly rod. Generally, we swing for them with double handed rods and skagit lines. Much like how I like to fish for steelhead around here when conditions are favorable. Wish us luck.

Upcoming Events

LSSA Planking Party June 24, 2017
Brighton Beach, Duluth, MN

Brule Spey Day September 9, 2017
McNeil's on the Brule, Brule River, WI

no takers. So, LSSA members Mike Pitan, Craig Wilson, Gary Siverson, Curt Wistrom and Kevin Bovee, along with Curt's son Reid and Reid's friend Owen Claflin, met at 9 am at the Rec Center in Knife River. We split into teams and covered both sides of the river from the Cable Hole down to the Scenic 61 bridge. We were pleasantly surprised by the small amount of garbage that we found. Very few hooks, line and sinkers were found. I patrolled the east side of the river from the top down to the first bridge and felt that the shore would be littered with hooks, yarn, line and lead. We assumed that the several highwater events washed a lot of that away or into the stream bed.

One thing that was discussed is to possibly come back in midsummer at very low water flow and look at the main channel and the various snags that may become evident. One constant comment from the spring's fishing was the amount of big snags in the runs and these snags were mostly lost line. It would be a good thing to remove all the lost line if possible. We will let you know what we find.



2017 Spring Banquet

The 2017 Spring Banquet/Annual Meeting was held at the Clearwater Grille banquet room for the first time. The site was absolutely perfect for our group. There was lots of display area for the many prizes, very ample room to move around and chat with folks and the food was great. What more could you want?



Laurie and Mike Warner

Slightly over 130 folks had signed up to attend this year, which is very close to the largest number of attendees since the banquet moved from the metro area up to Duluth. The good thing is that there is room for many more folks so if you have never attended a LSSA spring banquet, watch for the date in 2018 and pencil it in.

The prize package was the best ever. Rods galore, reels, clothing, camping gear, kitchenware, great artwork, food, lodging and even a couple adult beverage packages were available. We had new folks running the admission/raffle ticket table, Lisa Sweet and Tina Voce. A huge thank you has to go out to Lisa and Tina. They did a fabulous job that evening. THANK YOU both. Another huge thank you has to go out to all who attended the banquet. It was a beautiful evening to be on the shore and from all the comments I have heard to date, all thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Great Waters Fly Expo

The Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo, presented by MN Trout Unlimited, held March 17, 18 and 19, 2017 was a booming success in its new location at Hamline University in St. Paul. The central location, combined with pleasant weather (but not so nice as to make people want to go fishing) boosted attendance. Headlining the Expo this year was Dave and Emily Whitlock.

Vic Stark did most of the set-up and

take down, Mark Haas, Greg Lonke, Jeff Hinz, Jeff Donegan, Joel Pieper, Tom Cawcutt, Jason Kopp, David Thorpe and Scott Thorpe manned the booth.

Hundreds of people stopped in to talk steelhead. We recruited 22 NEW members and obtained 13 renewals for a total of 35 memberships. Free back issues of the Steelhead News were very popular as always. If you haven't gone to a Fly Expo,, they are a lot of fun. You owe it to yourself to come by next year.

Dal Holmberg

Jeff Hinz informs us that Dallas "Dal" Holmberg, former longtime LSSA BOD member, passed away on 2/14/17, age 75. Dal was a good friend of board members Jeff Hinz and Dave Bennett and the three of them would get together at Dal's house in Apple Valley for many BOD teleconferences. He was also very active on the Hobey Baker Award Committee, which awards the top male college hockey player in the U.S.A. the Hobey Baker Award.

Jeff says, "Some of us respectfully referred to him as "Uncle Dal". He had a gallery in his townhome that had every MNDNR Trout Stamp print from the beginning, all nicely framed. I was envious. A real fine man in anyone's book."

Larry Farmer Donation

Member Phil Vieth recently made a donation to the LSSA in memory of Larry Farmer. Phil's letter reads: "Recently my friend and a long time steelheader died. Larry Farmer was fishing the north shore rivers in the 60's and early 70's. He used to hang out at Jim's Bait in Duluth. Steelhead fishing was his top priority in the spring. He fished the Knife River almost daily during the run. He would migrate there from the Wisconsin Brule and eventually fish up the shore and into

Canada where he would meet with friends from New York who would head west from the finger lakes to also fish the Canadian rivers. We had met in the Marine Corps and when I moved to Finland, Minnesota. We fished the rivers together along the Minnesota shore.

He one time mentioned that when he first started fishing in Canada no one fished for steelhead. He often helped anyone around the Thunder Bay area learn the techniques of catching steelhead. He for many years fished the rivers from the Wis. Brule to around the Thunder Bay area and east to Terrace Bay."

Duluthian Magazine Article

The May June 2017 issue of Duluthian Magazine featured an article describing the LSSA and its work on the Knife River, written by Craig Wilson. Craig describes our 2016 habitat restoration project using Natural Channel Design methodology to restore about 2000 linear feet of the Knife funded by a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council grant.

"The NCD methodology is so successful because by restoring the channel's shape and profile to stable dimensions, stream function is maximized for the given site constraints. The restored stream channel can now withstand floods by redirecting the current flow away from its banks into the center of the stream channel. The reconfigured streamflow allows for the dissipation of floodwaters and the transport of sediment. This holistic watershed rehabilitation ultimately creates and maintains better trout habitat." The full article will be available in a few weeks in the archives of the magazine at: <https://duluthchamber.com/our-chamber/publications/archives/>. The LSSA website also features a video on the project. www.steelheaders.org/projects.html.

Steelhead Genetics Study

Sam Cook wrote about the results of the steelhead genetics study on April 1st in the Duluth News Tribune. Portions of the article are included here:

First-year results from a steelhead genetics study on Minnesota's North Shore streams confirm that hybridization between steelhead and stocked Kamloops rainbow trout is occurring, said fisheries officials with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

"We found that Kamloops ancestry was pretty much widespread in both juvenile and adult populations (of steelhead)," said Nick Peterson, DNR anadromous fish specialist at French River. "That being said, still the majority of fish we caught were pure steelhead. That's important to anglers."

Four previous studies by fisheries biologists at French River have shown that hybridization between the two species reduces the potential survival of young, Peterson said. The genetics research project is a cooperative effort between the DNR, the Minnesota Steelheader group, Minnesota Trout Unlimited and the Lake Superior Steelhead Association. The project will continue for two more years. The genetics study, conducted at the University of Minnesota, analyzes scale samples that anglers have contributed as well as scale samples taken by DNR biologists. In all, more than 2,000 samples from steelhead in 27 North Shore streams have been analyzed.

About 80 percent of those fish turned out to be "pure" steelhead, Peterson said. The others had Kamloops genetics present. And some fish that appeared to be steelhead — that is, lacking the fin-clip of hatchery-reared Kamloops rainbows — were in fact pure Kamloops rainbows from natural reproduction, Peterson said.

About 92,500 Kamloops rainbows are stocked each year by the Minnesota DNR, some in the Lester River and

some at the mouth of the French River.

Goldsworthy said he was surprised the genetics project showed that interbreeding among steelhead and Kamloops strains was geographically widespread up and down the North Shore. Since Kamloops rainbow stocking began, it has been limited to streams from Duluth to the French River, mainly to decrease their chances of interbreeding with steelhead. But steelhead anglers say they've seen Kamloops rainbows in rivers all along the shore and into Ontario.

The study revealed that naturally-produced pure Kamloops adults were found in four rivers and that naturally-produced pure Kamloops juveniles were sampled in five rivers. Those Kamloops rainbows were indistinguishable from steelhead.

"To see wild Kamloops being caught that we can't distinguish from wild steelhead — that's concerning," Goldsworthy said. That's an issue for DNR biologists because each year they take eggs from fish that are presumably steelhead and use the eggs to raise young fish to supplement natural steelhead reproduction. Goldsworthy said the DNR will discuss the study's first-year results with interested parties at some point.

The full article is visible at: <http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/outdoors/fishing/4243375-study-steelhead-kamloops-rainbows-interbreeding-north-shore>

Source: Duluth News Tribune.

2017 Planking Party

The 2017 planking party will be held on June 24th at Brighton Beach in Duluth. Show up around 5:00 pm. Bring layers to bundle up in if the wind is off the lake and a lawn chair. Check the website at www.steelheaders.org for last minute weather related confirmation of the event and to RSVP. The event is open to all members and their guests. There is no charge, but of course donations are welcome.

PLANKING PARTY BRIGHTON BEACH



JUNE 24th, 5:00 PM

Members and their guests welcome.
No charge but donations appreciated.
RSVP to website www.steelheaders.org

Traditions, Friendships and the Brule Opener

By David Olson

Traditions and Friendships

Each year when March 1st rolls around that sense of the Brule fishing opener nearing comes to mind for many. Thoughts of what those first drifts and strikes will feel like of new season rush to mind. The start of the new season brings a sense of urgency to start tying flies and spawn bags. It is time to get all the gear out and make sure everything is ready and in working order. Most importantly, it's time to connect with close friends and begin discussions for our annual trip to Brule, Wisconsin for the Bois Brule River Steelhead opener. This has become a tradition for my group of close friends, just like it has been for so many before us. This is a special time of the year.

Quickly, we make reservations for the 2017 Brule opener. Through many lengthy phone calls and text messages we come to agreement on a plan that is very similar to years prior. This plan includes our traditional early morning fire by the banks of our favorite fishing hole well before the first cracks of light descend upon the Brule river valley. After several hours of fishing hard we all come together again for great food and wine on the banks. The fine appetizer course usually includes smoked fish, cheeses, venison summer sausage, pickled green beans, and several other surprise delicacies. Then we break into the wine and share stories of the mornings hunt for steel. As the afternoon light fades and the fishing decreases for the day we quickly rendezvous back at our room for the final part of opening day. The big feast that follows consists of marinated venison loin and plenty of sides to go along with it. We continue to enjoy our companionship as we enjoy several Brandy Manhattans to wind down the day. The fishing on the Brule is great but the friendships and traditions we share in this magical place are even better.

Brule Opener 2017 Report

Everyone arrived to Brule camp around 5 pm on Friday evening. On this trip the group consisted of Joe Parpala, Jason Kopp, Tom Cawcutt, and myself. Quickly we unloaded gear and finalized the gear for early the next morning. A short trip to the Kro Bar was also in the cards on this evening for an all you could eat fish fry and mingling with other anglers on where the fish might be holding Saturday morning. We also discussed our own game plan and strategy for the morning. It was decided we would split into two groups and go to separate areas of the river. One group was going to target deeper holes the other group was going to be fishing runs. After we fished for a couple hours we would chat on the phone and meet up where the fishing was better. Everyone agreed this sounded like a good plan. We finished the evening back in the room with a nightcap and went to bed.

Shortly after my head hit the pillow the sound of Toms alarm let out a deafening ring at the all too early time of 3 a.m. A quick cup of coffee and a breakfast sandwich and we were off to the river. We sent well wishes to our fishing partners Jason and Joe as they departed. Tom and I reached our fishing spot about 4:30. We enjoyed good conversation and the flow of the river as we waited for dawn to arrive. As first light started to break from the east, I would be fishing about 50 yards downriver from Tom, just

(continued next page)



Above, author David Olson, below Jason Kopp.



Above Tom Cawcutt, below Joe Parpala.



out of sight. We started fishing eager with anticipation. In just a matter of minutes I hear Toms voice, “Dave, you may want to get up here”. I quickly race over and net a giant steelhead for Tom. The fish was beautiful, big and dark, crimson colored from cheek to the tail. We took several quick photos and released the fish promptly. This scenario repeated itself for the first 30 minutes. As Tom released his fourth steelhead, he asked me to join him in the run as I had not touched a fish in my run downriver. I graciously accepted his offer and was rewarded with several nice steelhead of my own. The fish we were catching were predominantly males, mostly spawned out and were fish that were holdovers from the fall. After an hour or so, we called Jason and Joe and told them of our morning and that they should come join us. They were quick to arrive after our phone call and were also able to quickly land some nice steelhead as well. It was fun have to entire group together in one spot. This opener was one of our best ever and we were only several hours into opening day. The fishing was fantastic, but so were so many other things as well. The river was beautiful, the traditions were up held, the friendships are never ending and the foods and beverage didn’t disappoint. The fishing won’t always be this good on every opener, but no doubt everything else will be.



Left to right: Joe Parpala, Jason Kopp, David Olson and Tom Cawcutt.



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The poster features a black and white illustration of two men in traditional outdoor gear fishing on a rocky riverbank. The text is overlaid on the image in a mix of red and black fonts. The event details are listed in a clean, sans-serif font. The bottom section of the poster has a grey background with white text.

Meeting Minutes

LSSA Membership/BOD Meeting
May 17, 2017 MINUTES

BOD Present: M. Pitan, C. Wistrom, D. Dahl, G. Siverson, K. Behn, R. Fjoser & K. Bovee. Member Present: P. Sandstrom.

1. Gambling Report: All required reports were sent electronically on May 7 for review, discussion and approval. NOTE: report sent prior to BOD meeting due to vacation. All members approved the report as sent. Motion made by Wistrom to approve the report as sent; seconded by Dahl and motion passed. Other: changed signatories on gambling account due to change in presidency. Also, sent in required form to MGB noting change in presidency.

2. Treasurer's Report: Account very solid presently. General fund account signatories also changed due to change in presidency. General fund to send project reimbursement list to gambling.

3. Banquet Wrap-up: Everyone agreed that the banquet hall and food was superb. More than ample room and prize package best ever. Sold out on \$3 and \$4 tickets.

4. Newsletter: Editor back from Canada soon so will be looking for items to be included in the next issue of Steelhead News. Get down to S. Thorpe ASAP.

5. Old/New/ Other Business:

- 2018 Mentoring: BOD agreed to hold the mentoring class again next year. Also discussed adding a fly fishing segment to it. Open to past participants in the mentoring programs. To be held in February. Pitan and Behn to chair this program.
- Duluthian article: The Duluth COC had an article on our Reach 9/12 program in the May/June issue of their publication.

- Patches/Decals: As discussed and approved last meeting, we have new patches and decals from Advantage

Emblem here in town.

- Planking Party: June 24; Brighton Beach. M. Bovee volunteered to do beans and maybe potato salad. Will check immediately. Sandstrom to get note to Thorpe for inclusion in newsletter and also get a return request note on webpage so we have a handle on attendance.

- Two videos were added to the LSSA webpage: www.steelheaders.org/projects. One explains the Natural Channel Design strategy and the second video in on the Reach 9/12 project.

6. Grant Update: Phase II

- Administrator presented to BOD the Line of Credit monthly costs to be reimbursed to the grant account. Period is from 7-2016 through 4-2017. Reason-grant funds cannot be used to pay this. Total is \$ 3465.89. Also brought before the BOD for reimbursement was \$ 1500 that grant account paid for WIPFLI (auditor) charge from last year's taxes. Reason-grant funds cannot be used for this. Total for both items is

\$ 4965.89. Motion made by Pitan to approve payment; seconded by Dahl and motion unanimously approved.

- Environmental Troubleshooters (ET) Contract Extension: The subcontract between the LSSA and ET was originally set to expire on June 30, 2017. This date was incorrectly set initially and construction to complete Reach 9 will take place over the summer of 2017. In addition, this extension will allow one more spring thaw event to be monitored and if repair required, ET can get it done. Contract to be extended to June 30, 2018. MN DNR has approved the contract extension and the proper paperwork has already been filed with the DNR-waiting for Minutes from meeting. Motion by Wistrom to extend the ET contract to June 30, 2018; seconded by Siverson and motion unanimously approved. NOTE: This contract extension is for time only.

- Budget Shift: LSSA met with DNR staff and discussed a budget shift for PH II. Statute allows for a 10% shift

in a budget area without having to be approved by LSOHC. Administrator asking for a \$ 40,000 shift into the Personnel category for the PH II grant. Reason-the Reach 9/12 project was not completed over the summer of 2016 due to a very wet summer thereby losing many construction days and the workload will be increased over the summer of 2017 and then to finish up the grant related work by November of 2018. This subject was thoroughly discussed by the BOD. Motion by Dahl to shift the requested \$ 40,000 into Personnel to finish out PH II; seconded by Wistrom and motion unanimously approved.

- NRRI Summer 2017 Work: We would like to contract with NRRI again to perform complete assessment of Reach 4/4.5; perform shocking on MWB to determine how far up fish are spawning and to get data on water temp in beaver ponds-will indicate cold water inflow from springs/ground water. Motion by Siverson to proceed with 'sole source' for NRRI; seconded by Wistrom and motion passed unanimously.

- Watershed tree planting projects: May 20-boy scouts to do a plant on the Main West Branch (MWB) at the area referred to as Red Dot; Conservation Corps Minnesota to come in the week of May 30 through June 2 to perform a plant on the MWB at the area referred to as White Landing.

Phase III: The BOD discussed extensively the idea of a fiscal advisor/manager for PH III if we are successful in obtaining it. No definitive answers but a very informative discussion with several avenues to pursue. Phase III application due in no later than 4 pm on May 26.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kevin J. Bovee, Secretary



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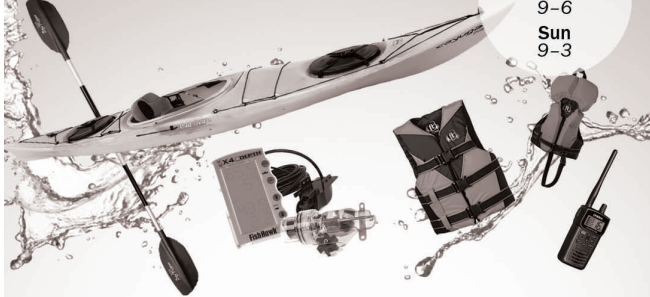
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