

STEELHEAD NEWS

A Publication of the Lake Superior Steelhead Association

www.steelheaders.org

Mar/Apr 2018: Issue 398



Peter Blake with swung caught steelhead from
the Brule last Fall

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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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Newsletter Editor: Scott Thorpe

*Past LSSA Presidents

From the Editor

While sitting in the LSSA booth last weekend, we were approached by Kathleen Bauer Spencer who offered to share with us an old photo for our Post Card from the Past feature. On Monday, I received the following email: "Attached you will find the photo I have of my father, Matt Bauer, and his MN State Record Atlantic salmon, caught October 12, 1991 on the Baptism River. I don't have a photo of the catch on the river. I don't know if one is available, however I do know it was quite a struggle to land the fish. My father was diagnosed

with emphysema (even though he quit smoking 10 years prior.) My brother was with him, also named Matt Bauer, who helped land it. Both of them thought this fish was different - not a Chinook. They transported the fish to a bait shop in Two Harbors where it was identified as an Atlantic salmon, and eventually verified with the DNR. He had it mounted and donated it to the DNR. Last I heard it was on display in the DNR Headquarters on Lafayette Road, and sometimes it is on display at the MN State Fair." Thank you Kathleen for sharing this with us.

MN State Record Atlantic Salmon.
Caught by Matt Bauer, Baptism River Oct 12, 1991
12 lbs 13 oz



Post Card From The Past.

News and Notes

Compiled by Scott Thorpe

In this 398th issue of the Steelhead News, I am pleased to include an article on swung fly presentation by Andy Selvig. Andy is an expert skagit caster, fly tyer and has demonstrated casting at our Brule Spey Day. He is one of the anglers who has agreed to be a steady writer for this newsletter. He is also one of my fishing partners and when it comes to catching any kind of fish on the swing, he never ceases to amaze me with his consistent success. Thanks also to Peter Blake, our cover angler; Jeff Donegan, Dave Olson and Mike Pitan, who supplied me with a large batch of photos for the Photo Gallery. Text me at 612-669-9601 or e-mail me with articles and photos at scott@scottthorpeflyfishing.com.

"God didn't have to create trout; He could have settled for bass." The Last Best Day, A Trout Fisher's Perspective by Michael Altizer

"God didn't have to create Wild Steelhead, He could have created fish hatcheries." No Way, He knew better. Rick Petrekovic LSSA member

Upcoming Events

LSSA Youth Mentoring Field Session
Date to be determined 2018

LSSA Spring Banquet
April 21, 2018
Clearwater Grille, Duluth, MN

Knife River Clean UP
June 2, 2018
Knife River Recreation Center

LSSA Planking Party
June 30, 2018
Brighton Beach Rd, Duluth, MN

Brule Spey Day
September 8, 2018
McNeil's on the Brule, Brule River, WI

Knife River Clean-up

A Knife River Clean-up has been scheduled for Saturday, June 2, 2018. Interested participants should meet at the Knife River Recreation Center at 9 am. Visit the website for updates and contact the webmaster with any questions.

Youth Mentoring Program

By the time you read this, the classroom sessions for our youth steelhead mentoring program will be complete. However, there is still time to be a field mentor. Gary Siverson has a list of go-to anglers, check in with him if you are interested in lending a hand at 218-390-3916. This is a very rewarding program, both for the students and the mentors.

Note to Membership

Kevin Bovee

Renewal/Angler Mailing:

The first mailing of the 2018 Lake Superior Angler has gone out to those members that have renewed for 2018. This mailing is the 2018A mailing and if you have renewed and the mailing label on the newsletter says 2018A or 2019A, you should have received your copy of the magazine. If the label says 2018A and you have not received the magazine, drop us a line and we will look into the matter immediately.

At the same time as the first Angler mailing went out, the second membership renewal notice for 2018 also went out to those folks who have not renewed to date. If we can get a quick turnaround of this second membership renewal push, we can have the second mailing of the Angler by the end of March or early April.

Moving/Have Moved:

Since we use our bulk permit for the newsletter postage and other mailings throughout the year, this mail is not

forwarded to anyone that has moved. We need to be alerted to any moves and to the new address for your LSSA mail to reach you. You can send a note to the webmaster at the LSSA website www.steelheaders.org and it will get to the proper people to process the move information. The mailing list is updated just prior to each newsletter going out so the information listed on the mailing label is our current information.

Advertiser Support:

It is mentioned each year in Welcome to the *Angler* that we must support the folks that support us by their advertising. Each year it gets harder and harder to solicit advertising for print publications. Take a look at the outside back cover of this newsletter. St. Croix Rods will be having a Customer Appreciation Day on June 16 in Park Falls, WI. What a great way to show support-show up and let them know that we truly appreciate their advertising support and that we indeed do use their product. Mary and I will be making the trek down that day. Each and every advertiser in both the *Angler* and the newsletter deserve our thanks and support. Please make it a point to thank them.

Spring Banquet

The 2018 Annual Spring Banquet is quickly approaching. The date is April 21 and it's up at the Clearwater Grille again this year. If you have never been to our banquet, try it, you'll enjoy it. The prize package this year will be great. Several custom built rods, fishing gear, clothes and even a kayak this year. Please see the RSVP in the newsletter. One thing to remember though is that walk-ins are not allowed. A head count is required so as to have enough food and seating that evening. Hope to see you there.

South Shore Grade Removal Update

As many readers will be aware, the removal of the abandoned railroad grade and culvert over Nebagamon Creek is a top priority of anglers and conservation groups in the region. The Brule River Sportsmans Club has spearheaded this effort. In addition, a group of interested anglers called the River Rats Stewardship Council has started a crowd funding website <https://www.gofundme.com/brule-river-s-shore-grade-project>

The effort has been gathering momentum quickly and as of March 20th, nearly \$9,417 of a goal of \$13,000 has been raised to augment the funds already raised or pledged. Please visit the website, kick in some money and become a Brule River Rat.

Dennis Pratt of the BRSC has provided the following status report, as of March 3rd, 2018 so funding is further along than this indicates. The present plan is to bid the project in early 2018 and complete the project between May 15th and September 15th, 2018.

A pre-formal bid cost estimate is as follows:

1. Design	\$5,000
2. Labor (tree, culvert, concrete removal, earth excavation)	\$45,000
3. Labor (earth hauling)	\$30,000
4. Heavy equipment rental	\$35,000
5. Site Supplies (erosion controls, construction fencing, boulders for stream grade control, seeding, tree planting, etc.)	\$5,000
6. Contingencies	\$10,000
Total	\$130,000

Pledges as of March 3rd, 2018

Brule Preservation Inc.	\$10,000
Izaak Walton League Duluth Chapter	\$1,000
Izaak Walton League – Wis. Trust Committee	\$1,500
Douglas County Fish & Game League	\$1,000
Lake Superior Steelhead Association	\$2,000
Western Lake Superior Trolling Association	\$500
Wild Rivers Chapter Trout Unlimited	\$1,000
Brule River Sportsmen's Club	\$15,270
Arrowhead Fly Fishers Club	\$2,000

Total Non-Governmental
DNR Funds

Total confirmed

DNR to Change Trout Stocking in Lake Superior *MN DNR, March 15, 2018*

To protect Lake Superior's naturalized rainbow trout population, genetically screened steelhead-strain fish, originating from wild runs in the big lake itself, will replace the hatchery-raised Kamloops trout strain the MN DNR now stocks to bolster fishing opportunities near Duluth.

New advances in genetic testing confirm Kamloops interbreed with wild rainbow trout. When that happens, fewer young survive and the overall steelhead population is reduced.

The change from Kamloops to stocking wild-sourced steelhead lets fisheries managers improve fishing opportunities on area streams while continuing the rehabilitation of the wild fish population.

"We have worked hard to develop a solution that respects what our diverse group of rainbow trout anglers have told us is important to them – harvest opportunities in both the stream and the boat fishery, as well as high quality catch-and-release opportunities for wild steelhead," said Cory Goldsworthy, the DNR's Lake Superior area fisheries supervisor.

Since 1976, the DNR has stocked the Kamloops strain of rainbow trout in Lake Superior's waters near Duluth. Stocking increased angler opportunity and reduced harvest pressure on wild steelhead. The action helped Lake Superior's wild rainbow trout recover from the detrimental effects of invasive sea lampreys and overfishing.

Despite only localized stocking, the stocked Kamloops genetics have shown up in samples taken from many North Shore streams, the Wisconsin Bois Brule River and Michigan waters of Lake Superior.

"These discoveries confirm that interbreeding is widespread well beyond Minnesota waters," Goldsworthy said. "It would be irresponsible for the Minnesota DNR to keep stocking these fish that research has shown negatively impact Lake Superior's steelhead population."

Numerous genetic studies on the North Shore all point toward the negative impacts of interbreeding on wild steelhead populations, but DNR researchers were never able to confirm genetic interbreeding in the wild even with genetics work done as recently as the 1990s.

"With new tools, we now know without question that we can't have a goal to rehabilitate wild steelhead populations while at the same time stock the Kamloops strain for harvest," Goldsworthy said.

The steelhead the DNR stocks will have an adipose fin clipped off, just like Kamloops did. That process, which doesn't harm the

fish, allows anglers to easily determine what can be harvested. Unclipped, wild steelhead will continue to remain catch-and-release only – as they have been since 1997. Because of this, the stocking change means anglers will see the same harvest regulations.

The 1995, 2006 and recently revised 2016 fisheries management plans for the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior all discuss the need for continued monitoring for interbreeding between Kamloops and wild steelhead as well as re-evaluation of using the Kamloops strain should interbreeding be confirmed.

More information about the Lake Superior fishery, including the 2016 Fisheries Management Plan for the Minnesota Waters of Lake Superior can be found on the DNR website at mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries/lakesuperior. Source: MN DNR website press release 15 March 2018

Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo Scott Thorpe

The Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo 2018 was held at Hamline University a few weeks ago. The show was very busy, in spite of the nice weather. There is still too much snow on the ground to lure people into yardwork. The show still seems to be on the upswing. We signed up 18 new members and 16 members made their renewals at the show.

Keith Behn, Mark Haas, Jim Swan, Greg Lonke, Jeff Donegan, David Simon, Zach Simon, Tom Cawcutt, Vic Stark and Scott Thorpe staffed the booth. Mike Pitan came down on Sunday and spent some time, and Paul Sandstrom was at the OPST booth to our left, while the Brule River Sportsman Club was to our right. It was a steelhead alley.

Much of the banter was about the press release from the DNR on steelhead

and Kamloops management changes (see press release above) and Nick Peterson's presentation on that topic on Saturday. Nick's presentation added more detail than contained in the press release. Naturalized steelhead will be captured at French River trap and tested to be certain they are pure steelhead and not KxS hybrids. The process is complicated due to the limitations of use of the French River Hatchery due to VHS. Using both Spire Valley and Crystal Springs hatcheries, a brood stock line will be created with several year classes. Eggs will be raised to sub-smolt size, fin clipped and stocked into the Lester River and the French River. The stocking of steelhead fry from the Knife River captive brood stock that has occurred above the barriers will be terminated, for the time being. The program will be evaluated and if required, modified as the results are monitored.



Below, Carol Ann Morris of the Carol Ann Morris & Skip Morris photography/author team with Jim Swan of the LSSA. In background, manning the booth are members Zach Simon and Mark Haas.



LSSA 2018

Spring Banquet

dinner, raffle & silent auction



**Saturday
April 21st, 2018**

**Banquet open to LSSA members & guests
Pre-Registration Required - No walk-ups**

Raffle and auction items include fishing rods, reels, tackle, clothing, pottery, carvings, restaurant and hotel gift certificates, custom crafted cedar furniture and artwork.

Menu:

**Swedish Meatballs with Mushroom Gravy
Herb Roasted Chicken
Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans
Assorted Dinner Rolls
Deluxe House Salad with assorted dressings
Assorted Desserts, Coffee Station
Full Cash Bar**

- Clearwater Grille
- 5135 North Shore Drive,
Duluth, MN 55804
- 5:00 pm
Registration & social hour
- 7:00 pm
Annual meeting & elections
- 7:15 pm
Full dinner buffet
- 8:30 pm
Raffle winners announced

Please RSVP before April 14th

By phone: 218.525.5960
By e-mail: Kevin Bovee outriderduluth@msn.com
Or by mail: LSSA, P.O.Box 16034, Duluth, MN 55816

LSSA Member Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

of tickets: _____ @ \$30. Total enclosed:\$ _____



Fish-eye View of the Swing

By Andy Selvig

Anytime you've ever been taught about the dangers of fast moving water, particularly in the event of falling in, you may have been well advised to not struggle against the current. You should draft perpendicularly or quarter downstream to safety, and for obvious reasons. Most humans lack the swimming strength needed to forge directly against stiff current. It is much better not to fight it at all and to channel energy into the easier task of slipping sideways to the shore. A similar principle applies in a swung fly presentation.

Any self-respecting predator has the simple dictum of conservation of energy. It uses the least energy possible to acquire calories. From our perspective, up above the water, who doesn't dream of days when you can rip smallie streamers as fast as you can bring them back to the boat -with a streaking ball of bronze tractor beaming mere inches behind? Or watch stream trout carelessly dashing out of nowhere to intercept a motor boating bugger, running only halfway below the surface. However, these are rare and elevated, abnormal events. A strip and pause retrieve or a dead drift with an occasional twitch are more standard offerings. They imitate the wounded easy meal, the free lunch. Now transition over to anadromous fish, particularly steelhead.

Steelhead migrating into rivers often hold in hard current. Sometimes fast, sometimes at walking speed. Usually stiff enough that a hard-striped fly will quickly escape a fish's interest. An occasional hot fish may well launch against your impossibly fast chugged, rubber legged articulated mop of flash and nonsense, but more likely, the currents dictate you meet the fish halfway, with a swung fly.

Think of a swung fly as the above example of an imperiled swimmer. Helpless to make upstream progress,



Andy Selvig with a swung caught steelhead from the Muskegon, December 2017.

but still able to slide across. Maybe your swung fly offering has just enough stamina to maintain position while transitioning across, maybe it doesn't and kinda sorta drifts backwards in an out of breath fashion.

Now add to that situation: Jaws prowling the darkness beneath. The steelhead down below can navigate the current exactly as it wants—it's just a matter of what its willing to do. Given the idea of an animal equipped with a predatory reflex, a swung fly in

the current presents an easy target, so why not crush it? If you think of two extreme goalposts: One being a dead drifted nymph or egg used to target passive steelhead and the second, a hard-striped streamer used to trigger the most criminally violent, a swung fly technique presents a fertile middle ground.

Swing Speed

Swing speed is one of the more confusing terms you'll ever hear bandied about.

It means actually nothing as to how fast your fly might be moving relative to the current. Swing speed merely means how fast or how slow the fly is moving perpendicular to the current. How fast is your panicked swimmer paddling to shore?

A fly line cast 90 degrees to the current is thought to create a faster swing, in that the fly washes faster towards the near shoreline or dangle, while a line cast more parallel to current is thought to swing slowly, meaning it takes longer for the fly to reach the dangle. Dangle is a term that means that your fly line is directly below you in the current. Your swing is completely washed out. Your swimmer is no longer trying to make it to shore. Hang down is another term that describes the same thing.

What's negated in the concept of swing speed, however, is how the fly might be drifting forward or backwards in the current. A "slow" swing moves slowly towards the dangle, but the fly appears to be competent at maintaining position in the current. By contrast, a "fast" swing suggests a target that makes no effort to breach the current, instead, directing that energy to sprint sideways to the shore.

Like a commercial airliner calculating airspeed according to divergent wind directions, the water speed of both the fast and slow swung flies could be considered as the same. It's the ground speed or river bottom that we're really using to define a fast or slow swing. A fast swing drifts rapidly over to the river bottom. A slow swing does not.

When you swing flies, in addition to considering the swing speed of your presentation, you might also want to consider the up/down tracking of your fly. Relative to the rate of current, how strong is your fly holding? Is it making forward progress in slack current? Is it holding in medium current? Or is

awash in fast currents, maybe even scrambling to right itself.

So, if the swing speed is decided by the angle of your cast, the up/down tracking can be how you hold the rod tip during the swing. Do you hold the rod steady and let the swing play itself out? This will result in the fly coming cleanly across, representing a critter able to hold in the current while sliding across. Do you slowly pull the rod tip upriver when swinging a slow pool? Now, the fly is confidently able to swim upstream.

Or maybe you are fishing a blistering fast run descending into a slow deep pool that you'd like to swing the head of. What if the fly actually drifts backwards into the swing by you letting the rod tip drift downriver? Many days, you'll find a good triggering speed for the fly to run. The above methods can adjust for differing currents speeds found in successive runs and pools, keeping the fly at an appropriate "kill speed".

Fly Depth.

One of the advantages of swinging flies versus stripping, particularly when fishing downstream, is the ability to drop the fly down a little deeper. The planing effect of a fly line in current is less during a swing than a stripped retrieve. As with controlling fly speed, the casting angle does a lot to control depth. Cast more parallel with the current, and the planing is maximized, drawing your fly closer to the surface. A perpendicular cast helps get the fly down. To get the fly down even further, try a slight upstream cast, which negates the planing effect almost completely (to avoid creating a belly, most people throw in a huge upstream mend immediately after an upstream cast). It's important to realize that during the swing, your fly is dropping the most during the initial stages of the swing. As the swing approaches its

hangdown, the fly is usually planing upwards. The up/down tracking of your rod tip will also assist in depth control. Tracking the tip downstream into the swing will create slack, allowing the fly to sink more, while pulling the rod upstream will increase tension, causing the fly to rise.

So, to finalize and put things all together...

Swinging flies can quickly develop into a massive head game, exponentially so when multiple days stack up to zero hook ups. What a casual observer could mistake for a calm, uninvolving affair can be an internal rat nest of turmoil, doubt and over-calculation -albeit, mental instabilities expressed in the guise of subtle rote movements, slinking casting loops, smoothly and repeatedly repeated with an unfettered, transfixed gaze. You can also forego all that and simply allow the fly to swing sans forethought. Let the fates decide... After all, no matter what you do, if you just keep plugging away, eventually, something will grab your fly. Some people do exactly that and to advantageous effect.

Most of us are not so Zen. We want more control in the game. We'd like to up our chances, and that involves learning how to actually drive the fly line as it drifts downriver and across. Which in turn controls how the fly moves, and at what speed, and what depth, and how that formulation of things will most likely trigger a fish to strike. We all want to get crushed more often. We'd prefer our swimmer to have a much slimmer chance of ever making it back to shore.

I recommend contemplating the fishes' perspective on the matter.



Meeting Minutes

LSSA BOD/Membership Meeting
January 10, 2018
MINUTES

BOD Present: M. Pitan, C. Wistrom, R. Fjoser, J. Somrock, D. Dahl, G. Siverson & K. Bovee. Others Present: P. Sandstrom & C. Wilson.

1. Gambling Report: All required monthly forms and statements sent out for review, discussion and approval. Motion by Siverson to accept the report as sent. Motions seconded by Somrock and motion passed. Other: we have a new employee starting at the Reef-Hannah Bubacz. Also Stacie Renne approached the club to donate money towards an upcoming trip to Africa where she and others will be bringing freshwater filters to villages that have no access to fresh, clean water. Each filter costs approx. \$ 25 and will filter up to 10 years providing much better drinking water. This is slightly out of our realm but we know the value and necessity of clean water. Motion by Siverson to donate \$ 250 for water filters. Motion seconded by Bovee and motion passed.

2. Treasurer's Report: Treasury in good shape right now. Membership drive has started so that will also help. Treasurer to get list of project payables to gambling manager so we can reimburse the general fund for approved projects that have been financed.

3. Membership Renewal: It is in the mail. An explanation regarding the information seen on the newsletter-mailing label will go into the next newsletter.

3. Angler Update: Layout has begun and we are up to page 18 so far. Should be out slightly earlier this year.

4. Newsletter Update: Scott Thorpe has arranged for a trio of guys to take over the editor's job for Steelhead

News. Jason Kopp will do the actual layout and David Olson and Nik Wilson will compile information and get it to Jason for the newsletter. Membership comments are firmly in favor of keeping the newsletter a hard copy. Discussion on how many issues to print annually-quarterly is not enough and possibly five issues would suffice. Presently we are doing six issues when time permits.

5. SDK Consulting: The LSSA rec'd an invoice for services rendered going back two years from S. Kuiti. This work was through August of 2015-approx. Funds cannot be used from the grant accounts so any reimbursement will have to come from the general fund. Several items of missing information were mentioned that the LSSA would have to obtain from Kuiti prior to any reimbursement. Pitan to draft a letter to Kuiti outlining LSSA's position and information request. Getting LSSA's Facebook page under board guidance a must. LSSA can utilize the social network for our events.

6. Grants Update: Phase II-bills have been paid and a reimbursement request will go in early February. Status Update due by January 31 and Bovee will get a version out for review prior to submission. MN Coastal Grant: LSSA applying for \$ 50,000 and the grant is due later in the week. LCCMR: grants are available for groups up to \$ 200,000. LSSA to look into applying. Grants due in March.

7. BOD Meeting Schedule: February board meeting will be week prior to regularly scheduled meeting since that day falls on Valentine's Day and all the guys

Photo Gallery



LSSA Board member Randy Fjoser with 29" buck from the Stewart River.

want to be with their valentines.

8. Fly Fishing Film Tour at Clyde: Arrowhead Fly Fishers and TU are presenting a fishing film evening and the LSSA will have a booth at the event. We will have several photos enlarged to be placed on a six by six foot display panel. Sandstrom, Pitan and Behn to man the booth. Budgeted amount was \$ 850 for the work. Seaquest Photography to spearhead the project. Motion by Siverson to spend up to \$ 850 for booth photos/LSSA banner, etc for the event. Motion seconded by Wistrom and motion approved. We can use the display at other events: banquet, etc.

9. New/Old/Other Business: Arrowhead Fly Fishers have inquired to see if the LSSA would be willing to do a presentation on our history, work in the watershed, etc for their March meeting. Wilson and Sandstrom volunteered. Maybe others. Sandstrom to get back to AFF with our response.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kevin J. Bovee, Secretary



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the DATE

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7am-5pm

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- **SPECIAL GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE** from 10a.m.- 3p.m. **INCLUDING:** Joe Bucher, "Fishing With Joe Bucher" Television Show, **PLUS** Members of the Lindner's Angling Edge Team
- **SIGN UP TO WIN ONE OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN PRIZES, PLUS ALL-DAY TENT SALE WITH SPECIAL PRICING!**

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