



THE SMALLMOUTH HORIZON

Helping to Protect and Preserve Quality Smallmouth Bass Fishing

February 2014

BADGER FLY FISHERS announce

Spring Opener 2014

Once again our fellow club will hold their annual event, one day of all things fly fishing - all species, all waters.

It's all set to happen on Saturday, February 8th, at the [Radisson Hotel](#), Madison. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m., featured speaker, Davy Wotton, will present, "Fishing Traditional Style Wet Flies" Davy has been a fly fishing professional since the 1960's.

He makes his home in the Ozarks where he first fished with his friend, Dave Whitlock. Of that first time Davy says, "On that day I caught the White River Grand Slam in four consecutive casts, that is a brown, cutthroat, rainbow, and a brook trout. I could not have asked for a better introduction to this unique part of the world."

In the afternoon he will present a program on the White River system in Arkansas.

There will also be the lively auction taking place right after lunch, and a number of fine items will be available for bidders.

Throughout the day they will have their regular, great assortment of master fly tyers and vendors.

Tiers will be demonstrating traditional and innovative patterns including, bass bugs, dry flies, nymphs, salmon and steelhead flies.

Then at 4:15 p.m. they will begin drawing tickets for the winners of the bucket raffles.

The day will conclude with the evening banquet where the Joan and Lee Wulf conservation award is given.

They would like you to join them for dinner, and to encourage your attendance, they will have a short presentation by Davy titled, "The History of UK Fly Fishing Compared to the USA."

This promises to be a really entertaining and enlightening show.

You can save some time by completing the registration form on their web site. They would also like to

know if you are going to join them at the banquet, by Monday, February 3rd.

You will find more information, including a list of auction and raffle items, on their website:

badgerflyfishers.com or contact [Bill Engber](#) (608) 238-4373

Go and join the fun!



Trips planned

The WSA Board has decided on our club trips for 2014.

Our first trip, on June 20th-22nd will be to Shawano and Waupaca Counties to fish the Little Wolf, the Embarrass River, and the Red River. Since these streams are not as large as was the Flambeau River last year, we will decide what waters we will fish depending on the amount of club members attending

Our second trip will be on August 30th - September 1st (Labor Day Weekend) to the Wisconsin River. Depending on water levels, we will either be on the stretch from Merrill to Brokaw, or the river just west of Eagle River. In addition to the river, there are numerous smallmouth lakes in the area. Some of these lakes have been relatively inaccessible to larger boats in recent years due to low water, and these can have excellent smallmouth fishing. Both sections of the Wisconsin River have numerous smallmouth, walleye, and musky.

The river miles on these floates are as follows:

Wisconsin River: Merrill to Pine River Landing - 3.92 miles, Pine River to Brokaw - 9.7 miles.

Wisconsin River West of Eagle River: Cleveland Drive to canoe landing - 3.7 miles

Little Wolf: Big Falls to Little Falls - 1.5 miles, Little Falls to Ketchum Road - 2.85 miles, Ketchum Road to Hwy 110 - 3.97 miles, Hwy 110 to Symco - 7.48 miles, Symco to Waupaca County Park - 4.89 miles, Manawa to Royalton - 8.8 miles.

Embarass: Caroline to Pella - 7.44 miles (1.5 on Pella Pond), Pella to Rangeline Road - 6.24 miles, Rangeline Rd. to Hwy 22 - 5.28 miles, Hwy 22 to Embarrass - 4.18 miles.

Red River: Gilmer Falls Park to Maple Rd. - 6 miles (best float), Maple Rd. to Wolf River - 4.5 miles.

There are several lodging possibilities in Shawano.

If you want to join us contact Andy Davidson: buroakakd@gmail.com or (608) 338-2639.

Mark your calendar now

Our Annual Fundraiser Auction will be held on Tuesday April 15, 2014, 6:30 pm at The Maple Tree Restaurant in McFarland

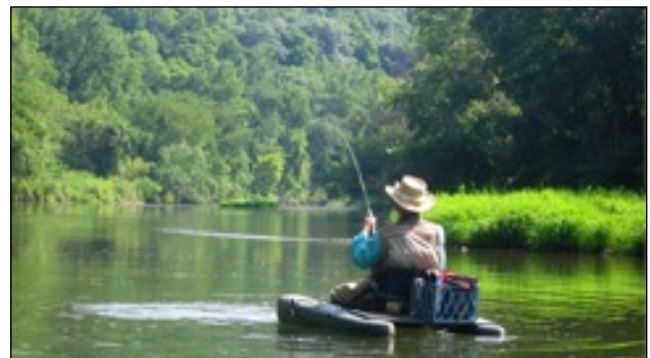
Come earlier for dinner

We will have fishing trips with top rated guides, new rods and reels, a variety of baits and tackle, flies and lures, gently used fishing and outdoor equipment, baked goods, hand-made gift items, restaurant certificates, tasty treats and much more.

100% of the proceeds are donated to youth fishing, outdoor education and recreation programs, restocking and conservation projects.

Auction items are being added to our [web site](#) frequently.

For more information, contact: Mike Simon (608) 334-4448 or madisonmike@tds.net



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Articles, photos, and calendar events for the newsletter are encouraged and should be submitted by the 1st day of the month to: Dan Johnson, 426 Glenway St. Madison, WI 53711. Send to: johnson7@tds.net, editor.

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Bottom Dragging for Smallmouth

From: Tim Holschlag's *River Smallmouth Fishing*

Here's a way to keep a bait right at fish-eye level. The simplest description of bottom dragging is to slowly retrieve an un-weighted, plastic bait a few inches above the bottom by attaching it to a heavier sinker system. This method keeps your lure at a precise depth while the sinker is dragging along the bottom generates sound and stirs up the bottom material. Crayfish, with their hard shells and pinchers, actually make a fair amount of noise moving around the bottom. The sinker clinking on rocks likely reminds fish of crawdads. In addition, a dragging sinker dislodges various small invertebrates, which also attracts the bait fish and the predators.

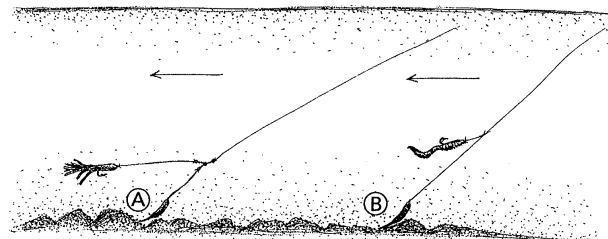
Dragging bait along bottom has long been popular with walleye anglers. Lindy rigs, Gapen bait walkers and other sinker systems are all used as a way to keep bait off the bottom. We've talked previously about drop shotting, spit shotting, and Carolina rigging for a smallmouth. These are all similar and bottom dragging is a good generic term for all of them. Bottom dragging produces the best in moderate current areas. You cast your rig downstream and drag it extremely slowly against the current. If you try to retrieve with the current or in a non-current area, you can cause the lure and weight to tangle. Also, this reduces the bait's action.

As the bottom dragging illustration shows, you can either use a 3-way swivel and attach a sinker and lure to the separate dropper line or use a palomar knot to secure the lure tight to the main lines. However, plastics don't have as much action when they are tied tight to the line, and I don't think baits are as appealing with that method. Most of the time, attach the bait with a dropper line that is about 10" long. This is long enough line to allow the lure to dart and flutter in the current. A small 3-way swivel isn't essential with the two dropper line setup. A swivel makes it easier to change dropper lines if one becomes too short or if you want to change the line strength.

Various types of sinkers will work as long as they are the proper weight. However, many tend to hang up too much if they are used in vary rocky environments. One of the best sinkers I found is Lindy's "no snag" sinker. No sinker is 100% snagless when pulled through fractured limestone, but this product is

pretty good. One can use an even less expensive sinker from a piece of soft, flat lead that you punch a hole in and tie on to the line. This kind of lead is commonly used by stained glass window suppliers and available at hardware stores. Most of the time a 1/4 ounce sinker will be sufficient, however, you may need a 3/8 ounce sinker if there is stronger current or if you are pulling through deeper pools. Remember, you must maintain continued contact with the bottom. Also, check with your sporting goods dealer for titanium weights.

BOTTOM DRAGGING RIGS



Rig (A) is a "No Snagg" sinker attached to a 3-way swivel with an unweighted tube jig on a 10-inch dropper line.

Rig (B) is a "No Snagg" sinker with a grub on a hook attached directly to the line by a Palomar knot.

The baits you can use are as varied as what you are most familiar with on your specific waters. Grubs, small worms, flukes, and hollow tubes all would be efficient. Flukes have a lot of darting action and are best used in stronger currents with a dropper a foot long if you want to maintain the erratic action.

Casting a "rig" is similar to casting the old bobber and worm we started with as kids. Don't snap your rod back and then forward. Instead use a lob, side-arm type cast with a slow backwards swing and let the rig rest for a moment. Then lob it out with a relatively slow forward stroke. When retrieving, a steady crank with the sinker slowly kicking the bottom is the winner. Sometimes you could pause it for several seconds just to entice a strike. This is especially effective in faster water at the top end of a pool. In this situation, the current makes the bait dart and dance in once place offering a tempting target. Experiment with various retrieval methods to determine what is successful in your stream/river.

The above article was edited from a more lengthy description in Tim Holschlag's River Smallmouth Fishing. The author has granted permission to print this technique in our newsletter. Add this technique to your fishing arsenal. For information on obtaining this excellent book, see www.smallmouthangler.com

Your dollars at work

Menominee River smallmouth

We were requested to help in underwriting a three year tagging survey that the DNR is coordinating with the Fishery Department at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. They will be studying the year around movement of the fish. Thirty smallmouth bass greater than 14" will be monitored in their seasonal movements at three locations from the Grand Rapids Dam through the Upper Scott Flowage.

The transmitters will be inserted internally, and the fish will be tagged externally. The twelve receivers will be furnished by the DNR and located throughout the project area. The DNR will post related signs at the various landings so that fishers can tell the DNR if they catch a transmitter, tagged fish. The DNR will also place a label on the transmitter so

anglers will know who to contact. If a fish is caught and a transmitter turned in, the tag/transmitter can be reused.

The seasonal fish movement prior to and after spawning, and a winter period will be monitored. The schedule will begin this spring now that the funds have been obtained. This information will then be shared with the donors and the public. The final report won't be available until the winter of 2016-17. We will have a project summary available for us by next winter.

North American Hydro, which owns two of the lower dams, is also donating \$1,400 toward the project. Our club is donating \$1,050 and the balance will be paid by the DNR and the UW Stevens Point. Michigan DNR, which the Menominee River borders, is not funding the project but is very aware of the study and does support it.

The myth of "clean coal"

Coal-fired power plants remain the nation's biggest source of toxic water pollution

A report released last summer by a coalition of environmental and clean water groups, highlights the critical need to clean up power plant water pollution. [The report](#) found that:

In the absence of any effective pollution limit, coal plants have become by far the largest source of toxic water pollution in the country, based on toxicity.

Of the 274 coal plants that discharge coal ash and scrubber wastewater into waterways, nearly 70 percent (188) have no limits on the toxics most commonly found in these discharges (arsenic, boron, cadmium, lead, mercury, and selenium) that are dumped directly into rivers, lakes, streams and bays.

Of these 274 coal plants, more than one-third (102) have no requirements to monitor or report discharges of these toxic metals to government agencies or the public.

A total of 71 coal plants surveyed discharge toxic water pollution into rivers, lakes, streams and bays that have already been declared impaired due to poor water quality. Of these plants that are dumping toxic metals into impaired waterways, more than three out of four coal plants (59) have no permit that limits the amount of toxic metals it can dump.

Nearly half of the coal plants surveyed (187) are operating with an expired Clean Water Act permit. 53 of these power plants are operating with permits that expired five or more years ago.

Based on available water permits, the groups surveyed 386 coal plants across the country and identified 274 coal plants that discharge either coal ash or scrubber wastewater. The report reviewed the extent to which the permits limit—or require monitoring of—the discharge of arsenic, boron, cadmium, lead, mercury, and selenium; the expiration date of the permits; and the health of the receiving stream.

The troubling results of the groups' investigation are due in large part to the lack of any binding federal standards limiting toxic pollution from coal plants.

Existing standards that apply to coal plant wastewater were established in 1982 and do not cover most of the worst pollutants. The EPA has repeatedly acknowledged that existing guidelines have not

kept pace with developments in the industry. However, for more than three decades the EPA has failed to set standards to curb the billions of pounds of pollution power plants dump into our rivers, streams and lakes each year from coal ash and scrubber sludge wastewaters. Fortunately, in April 2013, as a result of federal court litigation filed by several conservation groups, the EPA proposed the first ever national standards to limit toxics dumped into waterways from coal plants.

Without new water pollution protections, efforts to clean the air will transfer air pollutants into the water as scrubber sludge.

Our Next Meeting:

**Tuesday
February 18th**

Where and How I Fish

Local Guide, Ron Barefield

Ron will discuss fishing the Wisconsin River and Lake Mendota, and the different types of lures he uses throughout the season.

He will also cover the flies he fishes on these waters. And, as an added bonus, a discussion of the Mississippi River which Ron calls, "a bass factory".

Don't miss this one!



Upcoming Meetings:

Feb 8th BFF - Spring Opener

March 18th WSA - Mike Jacobs

Feb 18th WSA - Ron Barefield

April 15th WSA Annual Fundraiser Auction

Feb 24th BFF - Phil Pellitteri, "Stream Critters That We Need to Worry About"

Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of each month. The Badger Fly Fishers meet on the fourth Monday.

Both groups meet at the Mapletree Restaurant on Highway 51, in McFarland, Wisconsin. Programs begin at 7:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m. **Visitors and guests are always welcome!**