



THE SMALLMOUTH HORIZON

Helping to Protect and Preserve Quality Smallmouth Bass Fishing

February 2015

Badger Fly Fishers to host annual Spring Opener

The Opener will be held Saturday, February 14, 2015 at the American Family Insurance Training Center, Building "A", 6000 American Parkway, Madison. The doors open at 8:00 A.M. Directions to the new event site are available on their [website](#).

Featured speaker, Craig Matthews, has literally written the book on fishing in the Yellowstone area.

He is also an outfitter and owner of Blue Ribbon Flies in West Yellowstone, one of the most outstanding shops in all of the west.

Once again there will be a lively auction taking place after lunch, and a number of fine items will be available for bidders.

Throughout the day there is an assortment of master fly tiers and vendors. Tiers will be demonstrating traditional and innovative patterns including bass bugs, dry flies, nymphs, salmon and steelhead flies.

Then at 4:30 p.m. they will begin drawing tickets for the winners of the bucket raffles. The day will conclude after an evening banquet where they give the Joan and Lee Wulff conservation award.

The Badgers invite everyone to stay and have dinner with, ***please pre-register if you plan to join them for lunch or the banquet.***

You will find more information on their website: badgerflyfishers.com or contact:

[Bill Engber](#) (608) 238-4373

Go and join the fun!

Mark your calendar now

Our own Annual Fundraiser Auction will be held on Tuesday April 21, 2015, 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.

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

Fishing the Punch Rig

This method of fishing started in the southern United States where bass hide under heavy weed cover. A punch rig is a system to get beneath the heavy weed cover utilizing a unique combination of equipment. Similar to the Texas Rig the key to this method is the heavy tungsten weight (¾ ounce to 1 ¼ ounce) which enables the bait to get below the cover. While heavy cover is available year round in the south, in our region, the punch rig comes into play summer through fall when weed cover is heaviest.

SETTING UP THE PUNCH RIG: A seven foot heavy baitcasting rod with 65 pound braid is necessary to get a hookset and to winch the fish from the weeds. Start by placing a bobber stop (sometimes more than one are required) on the braid. Thread the line through the tungsten weight, and always use the lightest bullet weight which will get your bait down through the cover. The next step is optional, and that is threading a punch skirt on the line prior to tying on the hook. The next step is to tie the hook. The “preferred” knot is the snell knot for hooking efficiency although any knot that you prefer can be used. Hooks are sized to the bait that you use and for the punch rig to work, hooks must have a “keeper” so that the plastic lure stays tight on the hook. Next, thread your bait on the hook and bury the eye of the hook into the plastic. There is no need for a leader since you are fishing below heavy cover where the light is at a minimum.

CASTING THE PUNCH RIG: This is what I would call a “close-in” system since you will typically be near the edge of the cover. Rather than a traditional cast, you will flip the rig on to the cover. If the rig does not penetrate the cover simply shake the rod (don't move the lure) and eventually it should drop below the pads. Even if you don't feel that you are proficient with flipping, you will be surprised how simple it is with the heavy weight.

COST OF THE PUNCH RIG: This is not an inexpensive way of fishing and it is not for everyone. Not many of us have heavy rods with 65 pound braid. The tungsten weights are about eight dollars for two ¾ ounce or eight dollars for a 1 ¼ ounce weight. The punch skirts are seven dollars and the hooks are six dollars for five or six depending on size. Because the punch rig is not commonly used here in Wisconsin, it may be difficult to find the weights, skirts, and hooks, but everything can be found at Bass Pro.

This is obviously something that not everyone is going to be interested in trying due to equipment costs, but when the cover is thick and you see those lily pads shaking way far back, you might wish that you had a punch rig.



ROD –heavy bait caster

HOOK –heavy, either straight shank or EWG 3/0 to 6/0 with keeper

LINE – 65 pound braid

WEIGHT – tungsten ¾ oz. TO 1½ oz.

CASTING TECHNIQUE – flipping

PUNCH SKIRT - optional

BAIT – Some type of plastic creature

KNOT – snell knot best for hooking

Videos on YouTube:

“How to Rig a [Punch Rig](#) for Heavy Cover Bass Fishing”

“Summer Bass Fishing [Punch Rig Wisconsin](#)”

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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.

Steve Winters
Board
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Our Next Meeting:

Tuesday
February 17th

“Fishing opportunities on the lower Wisconsin River”

Kyle Zempel, Black Earth Angling Company

Kyle was introduced to the sport of fishing at a very young age by his grandfathers on the numerous lakes Northern Wisconsin. He was educated on Southwest Colorado's rushing waters, having the unique opportunity to live on the Animas River for many summers.

Taking the unyielding passion developed in the Rockies, he has returned to Packer Country to guide it's diversified bodies of water. He currently resides in the rural bluffs of Black Earth, WI where he created Black Earth Angling Co. www.blackearthangling.com, a fly fishing guide outfit.

Kyle guides for the trout of the driftless area and the diverse warm water opportunities of the Wisconsin River. He has become known for his guiding and photography on the water, which has appeared in



The Flyfish Journal, Eastern Fly Fishing, Hatch.com, and midcurrent.com.

Last season he put in over 130 days on the water over 75 of which were spent exploring and guiding on the Lower Wisconsin Riverway. Kyle will to unlock a few mysteries of the Lower Wisconsin River for you.

Upcoming Meetings:

Feb 14 th	BFF- Spring Opener	Feb 23 rd	BFF- Nate Sipple - Steelhead
Feb 17 th	WSA - Kyle Zempel of Black Earth Angling, Fishing opportunities on the Lower Wisconsin Riverway	March 16 th	WSA - Mike Jacobs Note, this is a Monday!

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!**