

History of the Brule River Sportsmen's Club Annual Spring Cleanup Project

By Dennis Smet

The Club started spring cleanups in 1972. Each year, members met on a Saturday in April to help keep the Brule River and its surroundings clean and beautiful. I became involved in the mid- to late-1980s when Larry Drews talked me into joining the Club. At that time, it was mainly a steelhead club with emphasis on the Highway 2 to the mouth part of the river and with concern for the number of steelhead in the river (to read about the Club's early history *click on* [About the Club](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page). Then, Larry asked me to co-chair the cleanup with Harvey Johnson. Harvey was a Brule native who had lost a leg to cancer. He was the retired Superintendent of Schools in Shell Lake and Ashland before he moved back to Brule. He and his wife, Minerva, were very active in local affairs. Harvey quickly told me, "If you want the volunteers to come back you have to feed them. Go get the donuts!"

At that time, volunteers met at Jack & Edna's in the morning for donuts and assignments and returned at noon for a pot luck in the garage at Jack & Edna's. My wife, Mary, thought that we could do better so she soon started putting a ham on the grill and we met at our house. There would be 40 - 50 for lunch. That worked fine when the weather was good. Later, the Club started meeting at the Brule town park and the event became more family friendly. After that, the event moved to Round-Up-North for a buffet-style lunch provided by the Club. I've coordinated the cleanup since Larry asked me to co-chair the event back in the 1980s. Many of you know how that goes when you agree to help with something.

Boy Scout Troop 211 started helping the Club beginning in 1993. To make things even better, local Cub Scouts joined the cleanups in 2006. The Club donates money to the scouts each year so they can have picnic lunch after their work is done. Remember what Harvey said!

Click on [Spring Cleanup](#) to see some photos from previous cleanups.

April 29, 2020