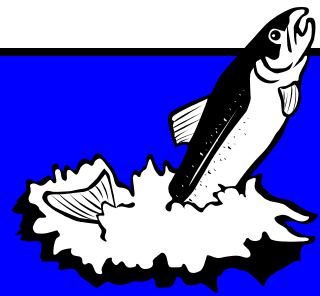


Brule River

Sportsmen's Club, Inc.



April 2026

OVER 500 MEMBERS DEDICATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE BRULE

Their Side of the River

by Mike Zicus, board of directors

I was enjoying a perfect early October morning, fishing one of my favorite stretches of the river. Time means little when I'm fishing, and I suppose I'd been at it for about an hour or longer. It was enough time to settle into that mindless rhythm of drifting a fly through a run, picking up the line, casting again, and then repeating the drift over and over again.

Random thoughts rattled around in my head. I heard a dog barking and moving along the top of the valley to the east. Grouse hunter, I wondered. Next thoughts. Leaves are coloring up nicely. Temperature is perfect. I'm dressed just right. Now the dog is barking to the north on the west side of the river. Can't be a grouse hunter. Couldn't get across the river or get there that quickly. Great morning. Keep making the drifts. The water looks perfect. It's going to happen.

Shortly, I spot a dog wading around aimlessly in some shal-

low water about 150 yards down river. Visible only briefly, it disappeared back into the woods to the west. That was cool! Must have been a coyote, I thought. Although, I've never seen one along the river before? Now, I catch a glimpse of something black moving through some thick, young balsam firs about 50 yards below and across from me on the west side of the river. A bear? Obviously, there was no focus to my thoughts. For heaven's sake, what's the chance of seeing a coyote and seconds later a bear?

It happened quickly. Suddenly there was a jet-black timber wolf standing above me on the opposite bank about 20 yards away. My mind flooded with thoughts, mostly in amazement. The most striking thing was my inability to read any expression on its face. The lack of concern over my presence was obvious, and any expression bordered on disdain. Wolves are not like any of

See "Their Side" on pg. 3

Club Members Teach & Share



2026 Great Waters Fly Fishing Booth
Bill Gobin and Josh Jagdfelt



25th Trout in the Classroom Project
Den Smet present to 6th graders at Northwestern



BRSC Calendar:

The board meeting will be held at the KroBar on Monday, April 27, at 6 p.m.





Brule River Sportsmen's Club Meeting Minutes March 23, 2026



President Dennis Pratt called the online meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Officers and Directors: Present – Ken Lundberg, Dennis Pratt, Mike Sierszen, Den Smet, Jeff Stollenwerk, Walt Swanson, Mike Zicus, and Ken Zivic.

Minutes of the February Meeting: The minutes as written in the March newsletter were approved following a motion by Ken Zivic, a second by Mike Zicus, and unanimous approval by voice vote.

Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's Reports: Treasurer Jeff Stollenwerk reported that February's beginning balance was \$12,703.05, and the ending balance was \$11,492.94 with the following expenses: Katie Thompson (February newsletter) \$200; Transfer to Savings (January donations) \$1,540; ProPrint (February newsletter) \$169.44. President Dennis Pratt reported for Financial Secretary Dean Wellman that there were \$225 in total deposits into the general fund since the last meeting. The Club had 6 new members and 13 renewals. The reports were approved following a motion by Walt Swanson and a second by Mike Zicus.

Committee Reports

Legislative and Audit: Nothing to report.

Education: Den Smet – Dennis Pratt and Den Smet visited the Northwestern Middle School on March 12. The trout in their aquarium looked great. They gave presentations to four of Kraig Anderson's general science classes. They spoke to 78 students in total. We will be visiting our Superior High School classes with the other aquarium on March 25.

Habitat: Dennis Pratt – We will be assisting Paul Piszczek with a tree planting project May 16 on the Little Brule and we've tentatively set July 25 to possibly return to the Little Brule and continue cutting alder.

Scholarship: Mike Sierszen – 2 applications so far, end of April is the deadline.

Membership: A renewal reminder email was sent out February 28th, and a membership form was mailed with the February print newsletter. We presently have 227 paid members out of 439 news recipients (52% paid thus far).

Social Media: Mike Zicus/Dennis Pratt – Nothing to report. Dennis is looking for newsletter material.

Other Business

Great Waters Flyfishing Expo – Bill Gobin joined our meeting to tell us how the Expo went. Dean Wellman did a great job getting booth volunteers to help Bill man the booth this year. This year's event was truncated on Saturday due to a snowstorm that arrived in the Twin Cities on Sunday. Bill reported that the event produced \$780 in cash and check sales and another \$140 from PayPal sales. Thanks to Paul Sandstrom for helping Bill set up on Thursday. Bill also made several great suggestions for next year's event, and he volunteered to manage the booth again next year. Bill is planning to drop off the booth materials to Dennis Pratt on Tuesday.

In-person Meeting – Scheduled for April 27.

April Fly of the Month – Dean Wellman. A Woolly Bugger tied my way.

Upcoming Events

Wisconsin Conservation Congress:

April 13 in person and April 13-15 on-line voting

Spring Clean-up:

April 25 (inclement weather date May 9)

Trout Habitat Volunteer Days:

May 16 and possibly July 25

Brule Family Fun Day:

August 15

LSSA Spey Day on the Brule:

September 12 at McNeil's Landing

Please check at

<https://bruleriversportsmensclub.com/category/club-calendar/> for the latest events.

The business meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Recorded by Walt Swanson



"Their Side" from pg. 1 our pets! It just stood there staring down at me. Perhaps, it was as surprised to see me as I was to see it? Was it was wondering what I was doing on its turf? Its striking yellow eyes stood out vividly against its black face. I don't know how long the wolf stood there. It seemed like a long time, but it was probably only a couple minutes before it turned and trotted off to the west.

Back to the drifting and swinging, now marveling over what had just happened. Wait! More movement in the balsams. Just as suddenly and silently, 3 gray-colored wolves appeared on the bank above me across the river. They stood shoulder to shoulder, looking down at me. Now it was starting to make sense. The "dogs" barking, the "coyote", and the "bear." Wow, it's a pack of wolves hunting their way past me and up the valley!

We stared motionless at each other for several minutes. Long enough that I was starting to feel a bit edgy because now it wasn't just a lone wolf. It was a pack of wolves! I got out of the river and walked downstream until I was closer and directly opposite them. No reaction to my approach.

As a wildlife biologist, I thought, "We tell people that wolves won't bother you." Okay, so I'm a waterfowl biologist, but that's what "they" say! What do I know? I waved

my arm. Still no reaction! After staring at each other for a while longer, the wolves turned in unison and trotted calmly away in the direction the black one had gone. I hadn't touched a fish yet, but it was a morning I was fortunate to experience and one I'll never forget!

I was leaving the run when a long-time acquaintance from Nebraska walked up. We greeted each other, and I excitedly told him about the wolves. After wishing each other luck, I continued down river.

Later, as I walked back towards the car, now on the west side of the river, I came across my Nebraska friend again. He was still on the east side, but we stopped and "compared notes" across the river.

As I was leaving, I jokingly said to him, "Now I'm on *their* side of the river." His response was perfect. He said, "I think *both* sides of the river are *theirs*." He was right, of course, and I wouldn't have it any other way. We are just visitors along the river. *They* are trying to make their living there and are a part of what makes the Brule Valley so special.

Postscript: I learned from a DNR Biologist later that I'd likely encountered what they called the Casey Creek pack, named after a stream in their home range that enters the Brule in the Meadows.

54th Spring Cleanup:

- Come join us on Saturday, April 25, to help clean up the Brule River Valley.
- We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Brule pavilion for area assignments (coffee, cookies and donuts served).
- Volunteers will then spread out and collect trash, returning at noon for a club provided lunch.
- If inclement weather occurs, we will hold the event on May 9.
- Any changes will be found on our website at <https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/annual-spring-cleanup/>

See "Their Side" on pg. 3

Best Squirmy Wormy Yet

Dean Wellman, BRSC Financial Secretary – Brule, WI

Midges are an important part of the food web in many streams, including the Brule. The San Juan worm, designed to imitate Chironomus midge larvae (blood worms), had a controversial beginning. Anglers would often shuffle their feet in a stream, dislodging the larvae before fishing. That practice didn't go over well and was soon banned! Pink rubber worms for steelheads became the rage in the 1990s. Originating in Canada, they are now popular on the Brule and dangle from branches in many heavily fished spots by the end of the season. The Squirmy Wormy uses a more lifelike silicone rubber than the old pink worms, which is much more lifelike than the chenille used for San Juan worms. The U.S. team won while using it at the 2014 Youth World Fly Fishing Championship. The "fly" was soon banned from international competitions, like those in the Czech Republic, because of its effectiveness. I copied earlier patterns when I first started tying them, although I disliked tying down the wormy material as it became "squirmy" and the thread created a pinch or break point. I did, however, enjoy watching my grandkids fish it under a small bobber with their little spinning rods! They often caught every fish that saw it. This version, described by Tim Cammisa, avoids the "pinch points" and allows you to replace the bodies on the same hook while on the stream!



A recipe for the fly can be found at <https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2026-April.pdf>.

BRSC Gift Store Order Form (prices include shipping & handling)			
#	Item	Cost	Total
	Lower river map poster of Brule (36"x24")	\$50	
	Women's baseball hat (ponytail back)	\$30	
	Lower Brule River map	\$10	
	Upper Brule River map	\$10	
	Men's baseball cap (mesh back)	\$30	
	Flies of the Month Series Book	\$25	
<p><i>The Brule River Sportsmen's Club, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization defined by Chapter 501 (C) (3) of the IRS Tax Code.</i></p> <p>https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/contact-us/join-the-club/</p>			



What We Do:

Fisheries Habitat Projects — Club members and others volunteer during the summer months to restore features necessary for fish spawning, growing, and feeding.

Clean-ups — Keep the Brule clean and beautiful.

Monthly Membership Meetings — Frequently include guest speakers.

Monthly Newsletter — Helps generate understanding of fisheries and water quality, and keeps members and others informed about Club activities.

Scholarship Program — Provides financial support to students.

Newsletter editor: Katie Thompson (goirish@cheqnet.net)

BRSC Membership Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 e-mail _____

Membership Type: Renewal (due January 1st) New Membership

Email newsletter only: \$20 – Individual \$25 – Household

Paper newsletter only: \$30 – Individual \$35 – Household

Donations

College Scholarship \$ _____ Education \$ _____
 High School Scholarship \$ _____ Habitat \$ _____
 General \$ _____ Multiple \$ _____

Visit us online at www.brulerriversportsmensclub.com

All information contained herein is confidential.
 All but \$1.00 of your membership dues is tax deductible.
 Donations are 100 percent tax deductible.

Officers	Board of Directors
President — Dennis Pratt — prattd@charter.net	Ken Lundberg
Vice President — Ed Chaplinski	Paul Helbach
Financial Secretary — Dean Wellman	Courtney Johnson
Recording Secretary — Walt Swanson	Mick Killoren
Treasurer — Jeff Stollenwerk	Glen Hill
	Dennis Smet
	Jim Waletzko
	Mike Sierszen
	Mike Zicus
	Ken Zivic