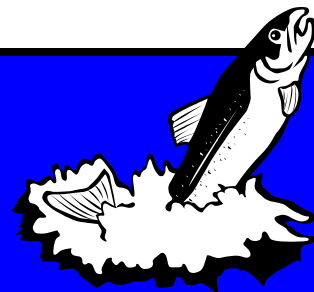


Brule River

Sportsmen's Club, Inc.



May 2026

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

2026 Spring Opener

by Ken Lundberg, board of directors

As usual the early season talk starts with long range weather forecast, snow depth and stream flow. In spite of our talk and predictions mother nature calls the shots. Last year we did not check the river prior to the opener and found our fishing area rather colored. This makes for unhappy fishermen as approaching daylight shows mud-stained water.

This spring I was told to check the river late Friday afternoon and all looked great except for the morning temperature forecast of 14 degrees. I opted not to cancel a vehicle

service appointment for Saturday morning and was able to get to the river at about eleven. The temps were near freezing by then. The walk to the river was easy on the not too deep crusted snow. It would be a good day to move around trying to locate fish. However, being 86, my movements are limited and just the walk to the river re-

quired frequent rests. There was also a painful thought of needing to climb that steep hill later in the day.

My two sons and grandson went to the river early and enjoyed (?) the cool morning. They had each caught at least one steelhead in slower water by the time I arrived. All their action was on yarn and spawn. They had not tried flies and that was all I needed to know. By noon the sun rays were reaching the water causing a slight warming. I expected action right away on my favorite brown nymph, but nothing happened for the first hour. I blamed it on the dreaded mid-day lull in the action. One can never blame it on the lack of skill to trigger a bite.

After a timeout for coffee and a sandwich and a brief rest I was back in the river. Finally, my first steelhead of the year



Ken's son Tom

was hooked. After a brief moment to admire how bright silver it was laying on its side in the shallow water near shore there was a quick twist of my forceps freeing the hook and the fish quickly returned to deeper water. A few casts later a nice native brown was fooled.

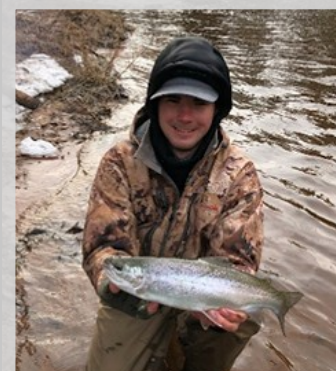
My day was complete and it was time to enjoy the

warm spring sun on an open patch of grass near the riverbank. This is a wonderful time to just close your eyes and listen to the sounds of the river and nature. Just being out on such a beautiful river is a reward in itself. Sam Cook, the retired Outdoor Writer for the Duluth News Tribune, did a great job writing about the simple pleasure of being out enjoying nature.

There seemed to be less fishermen in our area. The up and down weather patterns leading up to the opener probably had something to do with it. For many, it's too long a drive to find the river unfishable. The USGS stream flow monitor is the best thing to watch if considering traveling to the river. We like it about 240cfs or less for our lower river early spring fishing. If the flow gets higher the fishable water is restricted and you need to move further upstream. The fishermen we talked to seemed to be enjoying the first ritual of spring. As usual, there were mixed results with a few finding fish in fast water early even though the temps had dropped during the night. Most had not landed a fish,



Ken's son Mike



Ken's grandson Ethan

See "Opener" on pg. 3



BRSC Calendar:

The next two board meetings will be held at the KroBar on Mondays, May 25 and June 22, at 6 p.m.





Brule River Sportsmen's Club Meeting Minutes April 27, 2026



President Dennis Pratt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Kro Bar in Brule.

Officers and Directors: Present - Ed Chaplinski, Paul Helbach, Glen Hill, Courtney Johnson, Mick Killoren, Ken Lundberg, Dennis Pratt, Mike Sierszen, Den Smet, Jim Waletzko, Dean Wellman, Mike Zicus, and Ken Zivic.

Minutes of the March Meeting: The minutes as written in the April newsletter were approved following a motion by Dean Wellman, second by Den Smet, and unanimous approval by voice vote.

Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's Reports: Dennis Pratt reported for Treasurer Jeff Stollenwerk that March's beginning balance was \$11,492.94, and the ending balance was \$11,815.84 with the following expenses: Katie Thompson (March newsletter) \$200; WI Dept. of Gambling (raffle license) \$26; ProPrint (March newsletter) \$145.83; DP Reimbursement (postage) \$300.37; The First Impression (400 LR maps + paper stock) \$959.07. The Treasurer's report was approved following a motion by Ken Zivic, second by Mike Zicus and unanimous approval by voice vote. Financial Secretary Dean Wellman reported that there were \$1,080 in total deposits into the general fund since the last meeting and that the Club had 11 new members and 37 renewals. The Financial Secretary's report was approved following a motion by Ken Lundberg and a second by Dean Wellman.

Committee Reports

Legislative: Ken Lundberg – Nothing to report.

Audit: Dennis Pratt presented the committee's Audit report for the Boards approval. The Audit committee report was approved following a motion by Jim Waletzko and a second by Mike Sierszen.

Education: Den Smet – Both Dennis Pratt and Den Smet visited the Superior Senior High School on March 25. They gave presentations to five of John Kedroski's and Don Polkinghorne's classes. They spoke to 129 students in total. We voted to purchase a new batch of stickers for next year's 6th grade classes.

Habitat: Dennis Pratt – Club will be assisting Paul Piszczek with a tree planting project on May 16 on the Little Brule. Volunteers will need waders (preferred) or hip boots. We'll meet at the end of Dennis Rd. at 9 a.m. The Club will provide a Subway sandwich lunch with chips and soda. We'll be planting: 100 black spruce, 100 tamarack, 100 yellow birch, 100 hackberry, 100 sugar maple (no red maple) and 200 swamp white oak trees. We've also tentatively set July 25 as a possi-

ble habitat workday.

Scholarship: Mike Sierszen/Paul Helbach – Mike reported that we've received 4 applications thus far. Den Smet has resigned from the committee and was replaced by Club member Tim Spangenberg after board approval. We thanked Den for his many years of serving on the committee. Mike reported that the committee will review all applications and get together to choose this year's recipient. That individual will be presented for board approval at our May meeting. Paul reported that the Northwestern scholarship recipient would be chosen by the school soon.

Membership: Jim Waletzko/Ed Chaplinski – Jim and Ed received all the left-over newsletters and will be distributing them to many sport shops. They reported that shops in River Falls, Hayward, Ashland and Superior would receive them.

Social Media: Mike Zicus/Dennis Pratt – We have feature articles submitted by Ken Lundberg and Bill Gobin for our next two newsletters.

Other Business

Clean-up Wrap-up: Den Smet reported that we had 31 volunteers with 22 staying for lunch. Expenditures included \$32.85 for donuts and cookies, \$20 for coffee, cups, napkins and trash bags and \$352 for the Twin Gable lunch.

Brule Hatchery Status: Ken Lundberg reported that he was volunteering to serve as our representative on a committee of Lake Superior Clubs regarding the reduction of Seeforellen brown trout in Lake Superior next year because of the fisheries budget deficit. That group has three objectives/concerns: (1) Closure of the Brule Fish Hatchery in June, (2) restoration of brown stocking, and (3) restoring a fair balance of the stocking reduction between Lakes Michigan and Superior.

Family Fun Day: Brule Hatchery Manager, Angelica Kerchefska, reported that the Family Fun Day event likely won't be held due to the hatcheries closure. We have received a \$250 grant from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation for this event recently and those funds will be returned if the event is not held.

Next In-person Meeting: Scheduled for May 25.

May Fly of the Month: Wellman – "The Olive."

Raffle Status: We have our 2026 raffle license. The three prizes are: **Grand Prize:** Dave Norling custom bamboo 7'0" 4 wt. fly rod. **Second Prize:** Dean Wellman's custom fly-tying kit. Includes Brule River Fly of the Month

See "Minutes" on pg. 3



BRULE RIVER SPORTSMEN'S CLUB, MAY 2026

"Opener" from pg. 1

if you can believe a steelheader, but happy to be on the river once again.

Later in the day my sons moved to faster water and were able to get into a few more fish on yarn flies.

Our opener was complete, nobody fell in, the waders did not leak, walking in and out was easier than most openers and everybody caught a fish. We could all go home smiling and talking about the openers to come and those of the past.

54TH SPRING CLEANUP WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

The Club's annual spring cleanup was held on April 25. The weather was great as thirty-one volunteers spread throughout the Brule watershed to pick up trash. A wonderful Club provided lunch followed at Twin Gables.

We thank the Brule River State Forest staff for providing the truck to haul away the trash.



Volunteers

Den and Mary Smet
Erin Smet
Brett Arnold
Ed Chaplinski
Paul, Adam and Obie Helbach
Ken and Terri Zivic

Mick, Flo and granddaughter
Marin
Tom Heinrich
Lloyd and Lori Hautajarvi
Ron Gaare
Ken Lundberg

Dennis Pratt
Adrian Reed
John and Marsha Holter
Jon Holter
Mark and Susie Brathol
Dean Wellman

Tom Bydalek
Michael Shamla
Julia Shamla
Glen and Judy Hill

The Olive

Dean Wellman, BRSC
Financial Secretary –
Brule, WI

Experience is the process of gaining knowledge or skill by doing, seeing, or feeling things. An art that arises within a person. The Olive epitomizes "experience." Ken Lundberg wrote in his 2020 April "Brule River Modified Brown Woolly Bugger" Fly of the Month, "I prefer black and brown patterns in the early season and find olive patterns effective going into May." No truer words have been spoken about the color changes and variations that occur as the water warms, spawning has ended, and hungry "drop-back" steelheads are eating their way downstream. "The Olive," as our family has called it since the early 1980s, means only one thing, a brownish olive woolly bugger tied smaller and sparser. For the Olive, we go smaller with no added flash or weight as we fish these using a monofilament "drop shot" method. The soft hackle at the head is no larger than 1½ times the hook gap on a size 6 hook, and medium chenille is too big.

A recipe for the fly can be found at
<https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-May.pdf>.



"Minutes" from pg. 2

series booklet, Regal vise, tools, materials, and hooks to tie 50 fly patterns and over 250 flies. It will include basic instruction for each pattern. **Third Prize:** Six-inch heirloom stainless hunting knife with sheath. Donated by the Weber family.

Upcoming Events – Please check our Club Calendar at <https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/category/club-calendar/> for the latest events.

The business meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Recorded by Dennis Pratt

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	

The Brule River Sportsmen's Club, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization defined by Chapter 501 (C) (3) of the IRS Tax Code.
<https://brulriversportsmensclub.com/contact-us/join-the-club/>



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.

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.brulriversportsmensclub.com

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

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

Officers

President — Dennis Pratt — prattd@charter.net
 Vice President — Ed Chaplinski
 Financial Secretary — Dean Wellman
 Recording Secretary — Walt Swanson
 Treasurer — Jeff Stollenwerk

Board of Directors

Ken Lundberg
 Paul Helbach
 Courtney Johnson
 Mick Killoren
 Glen Hill
 Dennis Smet
 Jim Waletzko
 Mike Sierszen
 Mike Zicus
 Ken Zivic