

## LUNKER HUNTER SPOONPLUGGERS MEETING OCTOBER 4, 2007

### “SLIPPING FOR STEELHEAD”



**Don Stephens presented information on fishing rivers for steelhead.** He passed out handouts he made up on “Understanding River Structure” and “Slipping Down the River for Steelhead”. Don has **many years experience fishing for steelhead.** He then showed us a portion of a **steelhead fishing video by Captain Ken Neidlinger** who fishes the Saint Joseph River. Captain Ken **uses T-4 Flatfish to slip slowly downstream while trolling forward against the current** and cover more water. **Hottentots** are used for **slightly deeper runs.** He **also will anchor and let lures downstream** into the areas where fish hold. **In the spring** when the fish are shallow and spawning, he uses **Tadpolls that work shallower.** These areas are usually rocky with fast current in **2-5 feet.** The steelhead **spawn** is usually **in March and April** and he often fishes near creek mouths. His favorite colors are silver for salmon and gold-brass for steelhead. He uses **20 pound line** on the reel and a **30 pound leader,** as these **fish will often roll up in the line and cut it.** In tying the leader, he leaves a **¾ inch “tag” to catch leaves** before they hit the lure. In setting up multiple lines, he **sets the long lines first and keeps those rod tips higher.** **Controlling depth and speed** is as important with this type of fishing, as with any other. This approach to steelhead fishing requires a good deal of experience and practice to become proficient. Many thanks to Don for presenting this useful information to us.

Chase Klinesteker

Dons’ slipping article below:

## SLIPPING DOWN THE RIVER FOR STEELHEAD

# 1 SLIPPING THE CURRENT.--- A variation of Back Trolling, except the motor is in forward gear to keep the boat moving slower than the current. Takes a little practice to get used to having the boat go where you want.

### # 2 ADVANTAGES OF SLIPPING

The fact that fish usually face into the current waiting to grab food or any thing that might aggravate them is a good reason to present a lure swimming down stream with the current rather than a lure coming up from behind them.

SLIPPING gives best control of depth and speed of lures and boat position. Covers good looking areas either fast or slow by controlling motor speed. Hover in one spot for extra slow speed.. ( same effect as anchoring) Even troll back up stream to re check an area at a different lure speed.

DISADVANTAGE Low water and strong wind conditions are not conducive to slipping. Low water conditions causes the current in the Grand River to be too slow in some areas to move the boat effectively. Strong winds can also cause boat control problems.

### # 3 EQUIPMENT--- Rods, Reels, line, leaders and Lures

COUNTER REELS, Very important to know line length in controlling lure depth. Penn 109 reels can also be used by counting passes of the level wind mechanism.

ANCHOR ---Important to have an anchor that can be released fast. Fewer steelhead are lost when fighting them from an anchored position .A chain anchor is favored by most river rats because it gets hung up less than regular anchors..

ROD HOLDERS – More lures in the water equals more fish because of covering more depths and larger areas.

### LURES --- FLAT FISH, HOT N' TOTS and TADPOLLEYS

T-4 FLAT FISH — Widest wobbling action of any lure on the market, making it attractive to river steelhead who often hit from aggravation verses looking for food. (low metabolism because if ice cold water). RUNNING DEPTH—4 feet to 16 feet according to line length. Favorite colors are red orange, silver, and gold.'

HOT N/ TOT—Runs deeper than flat fish with less line out. Works good in fast current or when trolling up stream.

TADPOLLY—Works good in shallow water—3 to 6 feet.

# 4 LOCATION ---CURRENT BREAKS Understanding how and why CURRENT effects the formation of structure situations in rivers. is the key factor as to where the steelhead will congregate as they migrate up the river to their spawning areas.

River breaklines will be found at the edges of HOLES, SLOTS, EDDIES, POINTS, and other CURRENT BREAKS such as ROCKS, BRIDGE PILINGS, ect.

In March and April, concentrate in areas near the creek inlets. Work lures in and around any current breaks that exist above and below inlets. Steelhead will congregate here, waiting for conditions to be right for them to enter the creek where they will spawn.

Occasionally spawning will occur in the river, close to the creek, on shallow gravel flats, 2 to 4 feet deep.

Don Stephens