

Newscasts



June 2024 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Summer is in Session: See you at the September 10 Chapter Meeting

We wish everyone a rewarding summer with time spent with family, in nature and chasing trout. We will do a newsletter in July and then take August off ... everything will kick back into gear with a September newsletter and chapter meeting, which will revive the legendary Meicher Madness Auction. Watch for details and a call for helpers!

May Meeting Election Results

Our annual chapter meeting was held on May 14, 2024, with the only order business being the annual election of the SWTU Executive Board. The slate of candidates presented for this election were announced in the May 2024 chapter newsletter:

President: Steve Musser (incumbent)
Vice President: Topf Wells (incumbent)
Treasurer: Marty Chiaro (incumbent)
Secretary: Henry Nehls-Lowe (incumbent)
State Council Delegate: Michael Williamson (incumbent)

Four open Director positions:

John Freeborg (incumbent)
Josh Reilly
Riley Bellin
Ben Mechelke (withdrawn as noted below – Jim Beecher will continue in his two-year term)

Unfortunately, Ben Mechelke had to withdraw as a Director candidate because of his needing to move away from the area. Since one of the open Director positions was being vacated by Jim Beecher after his serving only the first year of a two-year term, Jim agreed to stay on the board until a new candidate is found and elected to replace him. Please reach out to a Board member if interested.

Chapter members were offered the opportunity to nominate from the floor additional candidates for the election. **The slate of candidates was accepted and approved by unanimous voice vote.**

Spring Fair 2024 = Food, Fun, & Fundraising

Our 3rd annual Spring Fair Fundraiser held April 20, 2024, was a fantastic time. Held on the shore of Lake Monona at the East Side Club, we feasted on wonderful food catered by the very generous SWTU member Ben Lubchansky and his family from 608 Community Supported Kitchen. The improved sound system arranged by member Mark Nash ensured everyone could hear our entertaining master of ceremonies Topf Wells. The spin and fly casting competition was challenged a bit by mother nature, but Pat Hasburgh, Carol Murphy and Kayln Hoggard braved the elements and pulled it off. The event raised over \$12,600 to support the chapter's key conservation work on your local cold water resources.

Many thanks to the folks to the fundraising committee and chapter members that donated time and effort to host the event:

Henry Nehls-Lowe
Dave Fowler
Dyan Lesnik
Don Golembiewski
Topf Wells
Ben Lubchansky & family
Marty Chiaro
Wayne Griffin
Pat Hasburgh

Kayln Hoggard
Carol Murphy
Mark Nash
John Freeborg

And all the gracious donors for the raffle and silent auction items! Listed here are the top donors by value of the items/services ... in the interests of space, please see the [full listing here on swtu.org](#). As you are able to, please thank the individual contributors and visit the businesses that gave generously of their products and services.

- Paul Douglas, 2 framed prints (\$900)
- Kyle Zempel/Black Earth Angling, guided trip (\$575)
- Dan Donovan/Musky Fool, guided trip (\$550)
- Steve Vance, 2 guided trips (\$550)
- Craig Amacker/Madison Fly Fishing, guided trip (\$550)
- Luke Annear, guided trip (\$525)
- Laura Vance/Vortex, 4 pair sunglasses (\$516)
- Friends of Tom Wendelberg, 8 boxes of TW flies (\$500)
- Bob Selk, St.Croix Rod & Lamson Reel (\$450)
- John Bleimehl, Sage Fly Rod (\$400)

And many thanks to Karl Spiekerman for these photos. [Find more in the full article.](#)



Learn What Your Board's Been Up To

Minutes from SWTU Board of Director meetings can be viewed [in this Google Drive](#). If you have questions on what you read in them, reach out to one of the Board members listed on the last page of each newsletter. (Note that you may need to click the "Last Modified" header at the top to sort the list with the latest minutes at the top.)

SWTU Comments on Epic Systems Construction Near the Sugar River

On May 18th SWTU submitted written comments to the DNR regarding a permit application from Epic Systems Corporation to construct a bridge across the Sugar River and the Military Ridge State Trail, adjacent to their Verona campus, which will include stream realignment/restoration and discharging fill materials in the wetlands. SWTU commented that Epic's proposed mitigation and restoration are inadequate, that the permit has not received as full a review and the opportunity for public comment as it should have, and the project should be the subject of an Environmental Impact Statement. We also made several recommendations, including that Epic should provide a permanent easement to improve public access by anglers, birders, and hikers to this portion of the Sugar River. For more details on SWTU's letter, [please review it here \(PDF\)](#).

We Used Every Tool in the Tool Box (Workday report: 1)

By Topf Wells

SWTU joined the Nohr Chapter and the DNR in our continuing work to clear willows and box elder along the upper reaches on Big Spring Creek. Doing so is the first step in the restoration of oaks and grasses. Beaver activity is one of the hottest topics in stream and wetland health. Along Big Spring, the many beavers and dams are probably doing more harm than good. Eliminating willow will move the beaver along to happier feeding grounds. We're certainly improving access to what had been a popular part of the stream. In the section we worked on last year, the naturally occurring red oakshave prospered with the removal of competing willows.

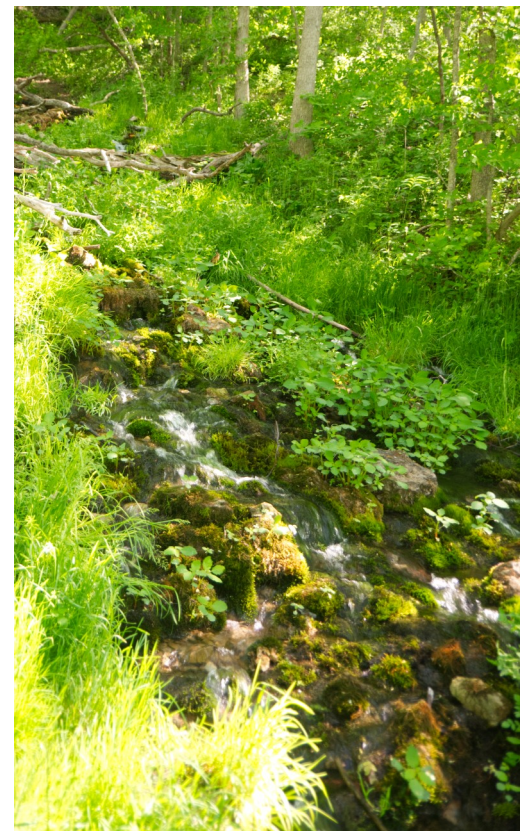
The willows are so dense we used every piece of equipment the DNR or either chapter has: chainsaws, brush cutters, hand saws, loppers and, The Star of the Day, the new brush cutter SWTU purchased for the DNR. Holy moly, it chews up brush of surprising size and leaves an area well cleared. The DNR's first use was to cut a path to the work site. That alone showed the machine will work wonders for the DNR crew that works on easements this winter.

Besides all the blades buzzing and clipping, we had to spray the cut willows assiduously. As Jim Hess reminds us, a willow cut and unsprayed this year becomes five willows next year.

Both efforts were tough, the cutting because of the building heat and the spraying because of the recent, rapid growth of the undergrowth. Stinging nettle is having a very good spring – one of the reasons gloves and long sleeves is a good idea.

We prevailed. At morning's end we had cleared a section as big as last year and started work on the other side of the creek. The vegetation was so thick that we probably did not treat every willow stem; but I grade us at a solid A – maybe 98%.

The nature of the work had us scattered along the stream. When we regrouped about 11.15 Justin Haglund, the DNR fish biologist, called the day with the heat becoming oppressive (at 12:20 in downtown Dodgeville the thermometers read 86 degrees; ouch). Dyan Lesnik then passed her



rhubarb bars around. They are fabulous. I hope rhubarb is still in season on our last work day of the spring. Brownies, pork sticks, apples, pears and Jim's ice cold well water put us on the road home in fine shape.

We had a great turnout of 20 folks with Nohr making a grand showing. Several Nohr and SWTU officers and board members were part of the crew. For SWTU's part, Dyan and Wayne Griffin, her husband, are owed big thanks. They drove the trailer, cut and sprayed more than anyone, and those rhubarb bars. Wayne might be the day's hero. When one of the DNR's chainsaws died, Wayne hustled the brush cutter out of the trailer and took up any slack.

Our Jim Hess and Nohr's Ted Swenson organized a complex work day wonderfully. Justin and the DNR crew had the site readily accessible and used some of the heavier equipment to great effect.

Photos courtesy Jim Beecher. See more [in the article on swtu.org](#).



It Takes Many Folks to Get to Perfect (Workday report: 2)

By Topf Well

Many thanks to the many people who helped make the Lowery Creek work day close to perfect.

About 20 volunteers showed up to plant 65 or so oak trees on the new Cates easement on Lowery Creek. This is a healthy brook trout stream, one of the sources of DNR wild brood stock, and the trees will help maintain cold water temps.

Justin Haglund, the DNR fish biologist for Iowa and Richland Counties, Jim Hess of SWTU, and Ted Swenson of Nohr had planned the day. Justin and his crew prepared the work site. That means digging (thankfully with mechanical assistance) 65 holes and having fencing material and trees in place.

We had all the trees in the ground and properly matted and fenced by 11:20, which left plenty of time for brownies, pork sticks, apples, and tangerines (note the diet is becoming more balanced – thanks to Carol Murphy) and conversation.

The Cates family has worked with conservation organizations and the DNR to restore a prairie and the stream and to allow the public fishing access. Those actions bespeak a strong conservation ethic and generosity. So, the first thanks go to the Cates.

BTW, some might wonder how some of the streams we work on fish. We can provide a definitive report on Lowery. Two fly fishers were on the easement when we arrived and fished it methodically downstream – one account had them using leech patterns. They said they were catching brook trout and having a grand time.

Thanks to Justin and Jared of the DNR for all the work before and during the work day. These guys never quit. As we were leaving, they were pulling data from temperature loggers and measuring stream flow. Jim and Ted double-teamed the planning and notifying volunteers. The turn out and relatively easy work were the happy results. All our work days are fun and productive but I really enjoy the cooperative ones with Nohr. They've accomplished so much in the Blue watershed that I feel one aspect of these days is SWTU's appreciation of that Chapter.



Much thanks to our varied cast of volunteers. We had SWTU Board Members and regular participants plus a couple of newer members (hooray). Some of Justin's DNR colleagues from Dodgeville joined us. Nohr had some leaders and members present. My favorite was a young man I did not recognize. When I asked what brought him out, he said he was preparing for Confirmation and needed to provide some community service (along with other spiritual exercises).

Hmm. I noted in my day, preparation for Confirmation entailed months of memorizing questions and answers from the catechism. He said, it's a lot better now. More talk about trees, his family's land and the creek on their place, Whitford. That should ring a bell with all our work with TPE on Whitford. I gave him the reference to Justin's assessment of Whitford and urged him and his parents to check it out. They might discover that they have a creek about as cool as Lowery.

It's a small and sometimes happy world. Photos courtesy Jim Hess. See more [in the article on swtu.org](https://www.swtu.org).



Vets on the Fly

By Dyan Lesnik

Vets on the Fly activities are free for all Vets and their family members. All equipment is provided so just show up for their events for socialization and fishing fun. [Learn more at their Facebook page.](#)

Carp Conversation – Free event

With summer heat bearing down, July is a good time to give trout a break and pursue something else ... maybe carp? Join Kalyn to learn all about this. (note from the editor: carp on the fly is technically challenging and rewarding – they surface feed and put on a tremendous fight. If you know, you know. If you don't, maybe see what Kalyn has to say about it.)

Quick links to cool content

- [Here is an excellent article](#) on the **brown trout removal project on Maple Dale Creek to bolster brook trout.** (PDF)
- **Dane County Waters Survey:** The Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership is partnering with the University of Wisconsin Extension on a survey to gather input from residents and groups interested in protecting Dane County waters. Results from the survey will help guide future programming and resources. Please consider sharing your thoughts and concerns about our waters and actions to help protect them [by completing this survey.](#)

Welcome New Members

We're pleased to announce the addition of the following new members to our ranks!

Katherine Field
Benjamin Simoni
Nada Clark
Beau Gueths
Kalyn Hoggard
Alison Meschke

Lexie Henert
Peter Garson
Jonathan Rundell
Karla Tigges
Lezli Redmond

We are honored to have you among us. Please join our next meeting – whether virtual or in person – as we'd love to get to know you better. **If you will be attending your first meeting**, please contact [Topf Wells](#) so we can expect you. (Note that some longer-term members may be captured in the list above. A glitch in the excel file has made it harder to sort ... but it's better to be inclusive and we're happy to have your continued support!)



Carp Conversation with Kalyn

The Carp Whisperer, is all set to spill the secrets of Fly Fishing for Carp for a fin-tastic time! No cost, all are invited.

- Join us on July 6, 2024,
- from 3 to 5 pm
- Deer Creek Sports and Conservation Club

<https://deercreeksportsconservation.com>
lineworkersflyfishers@gmail.com
(608) 577-5503



Fountains of Youth

Classic trout flies that have withstood the test of time ... flies that remain "forever young"

by Rusty Dunn

"Of all feathers required for fly dressing, the hackle is the most important and, unfortunately, the most difficult to procure." --F.M. Halford, 1886 in Floating Flies and How to Dress Them

How times have changed. If Halford could visit a fly shop today, he would be astonished. The quality and variety of modern dry fly hackle is extraordinary. Colors that used to be as rare as the crown jewels are now as common as a knockoff Rolex. How did it happen? A handful of meticulous, observant, and persistent fly tyers raised chickens for decades, choosing and breeding at each generation only birds with the best quality of hackle. Such 'selective breeding' yielded today's birds having long uniform feathers with thin flexible stems and short, stiff, glassy barbs.

Chickens were domesticated over 4,000 years ago following crosses between at least two different species of wild Asian jungle fowl. Two separate and independent poultry breeding programs in America produced today's fly-tying elite from ordinary domestic stock. One lineage began with Harry Darbee in the 1930s, and the other with Henry Hoffman in the 1960s. Their pioneering work on poultry breeding for fly tyers lives on today ... literally!

Harry Darbee (1906-1983) was a commercial fly tyer in the Catskill town of Livingston Manor, NY. Darbee bred chickens expressly for fly tying from the 1930s through the 1970s. He began with stock obtained from the famous fly tyer Reuben Cross, but Darbee had the wisdom to diversify his flock by crossing it with old European varieties, most notably Blue Andalusian and English Gamecock. Darbee bred mainly for feather color, especially the many shades of dun. He spent decades seeking an elusive "self-blue" variety, which might yield only natural blue dun offspring. He never succeeded, but Darbee's many flavors of dun were treasures of the fly-tying world.

Darbee was as generous as he was clever. He gave eggs in 1954 to Minnesota's Andy Miner, who expanded the color range and greatly improved feather quality. Darbee described Miner's hackle as "the finest in the world". Miner never sold a single feather or egg, but, like Darbee, he gave many away. He gave eggs to Michigan's Ted Hebert in 1973 and to Pennsylvania's Buck Metz in 1972, who established the first large-scale hackle business. Metz subdivided the Darbee flock, yielding a series of lines whose feather colors were more predictable. This was an important advance, as it improved on the random "shotgun breeding" strategies of Darbee.

Henry Hoffman was a commercial fly tyer in Warrenton, Oregon. Disappointed with the quality of available hackle and being raised on a chicken farm, Hoffman decided to take matters into his own hands. He bought a pair of bantam Plymouth Rock (grizzly) chickens at a livestock show in 1965 for five bucks. The birds had exceptional feathers and founded Hoffman's selective breeding program. He later added browns and natural duns to the flock. Within 10-15 years, Hoffman produced the finest hackle ever known, especially his grizzly. His improvements in feather quality were remarkable. Before Hoffman, rooster saddles were poorly suited for dry flies, but by 1980 Hoffman "Super Saddles" were legendary. Demand was high, supply was low, and Hoffman hackle was as scarce as it was famous. Genetics of both the Darbee/Miner/Hebert and the Hoffman stocks is now entrusted to Tom Whiting of Whiting Farms. Continuing advances in the quality, variety, and colors of Whiting dry fly hackle are nothing short of amazing. Hackles that most tyers thought impossible are now everyday items in any good fly shop.

When you next wrap a hackle feather of uncommon color or beauty, or you hackle a dozen #24 midges with similarly sized hackle, think of the observant poultry breeders who made it possible. Harry Darbee's, Henry Hoffman's, and Tom Whiting's hands will be all over your finished flies. Their brood stocks are a century in the making, yet they continue to improve every year. We should all age so gracefully. © Rusty Dunn, 2024

----- Adams Midge -----

The Adams Midge might just satisfy all your midge needs, but black, olive, cream, and grizzly midges are also useful. Vary colors of the thread, tail, dubbing, and hackle as needed.

Hook: Dry fly, #20-26

Thread: Gray, the smallest available

Tail: Cree or mixed grizzly & brown rooster feather barbs

Body: Gray muskrat, beaver, silk or Super Fine dubbing

Hackle: Cree or grizzly & brown mixed rooster



Stay Connected



Know what's happening by connecting to our [Chapter Calendar](#)!



[SWTU's Instagram account](#) is a great place for interesting news, facts and photos.



Check out [Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited on Facebook](#) to connect to activities, discussions and friends. (You should be able to view the page without a Facebook account.)

If you know of a member not receiving emails from SWTU, please have them email madkasel@gmail.com

Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

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Board Member	Jim Beecher
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