

# Newscasts

Summer 2024 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Meicher Madness Auction returns for September 10 Membership Meeting

The Meicher Madness Auction was one of SWTU's most fun and profitable events for many years. Stopped by COVID it returns at our September 10 meeting at Schwogler's on Grand Canyon Drive.

Larry Meicher was a founding member of SWTU and a tremendous force for good in our Chapter and at State Council. Larry did everything for us, serving as an officer and board member, a fly tying instructor, a participant at work days, and always as a passionate conservationist. One of his many contributions to SWTU was the creation of the March Madness Auction. The Chapter would gather for a fun night of bidding on wonderful gear and trips and some unbelievable junk. Larry (aka Dr. Sausage) presided over the event as the Auctioneer Supreme. He could be serious and he could be silly, anything to drive up the bids and fill the Chapter's coffers. At his passing we named the event Meicher Madness in his honor.



The madness and fun will be renewed on 9/10. Everyone will have some chances at some cool and highly usable gear and the proceeds will support all the Chapter activities.

### Here are some needs and changes for this year's auction:

**Help.** We need about a dozen folks to help at the auction itself: cashiers, folks to check in all the bidders, organizers of all the gear, and runners to make sure the bidders get the stuff they win. Contact Topf Wells at [topfwells@gmail.com](mailto:topfwells@gmail.com) if you can help.

**No Junk.** Traditionally members have brought in just about any gear they no longer had a use for. Along with great stuff, we must have received a hundred leaky waders and other equipment that had aged into oblivion.

That was sort of fun. But not this year, please.

The reason is in the five years since the auction was last held we have had a mountain of really good gear donated to the Chapter. Much of it from the families of deceased members or those who cannot fish anymore. This auction will be focused on selling those excellent rods, reels and other gear. We just won't have the time this year to deal with junk.

**Buyers.** With all this gear, we need buyers who want or need fishing stuff. Lots of you might be like me. At last count, I have 10 fly rods, 3 working fly reels, and 6 spinning outfits. I'll buy something at the auction but not sure what that might be. For those of our 800 members and friends who might be new to fishing, trout fishing or still gearing up, this auction is a golden opportunity to get some top notch fishing stuff at extremely reasonable prices. This will be a great meeting to invite a new member of the Chapter or a new angler.

**Special Request.** Trips and flies tied by our skilled fly tying members were the best sellers at all the previous auctions. Those fly tyers have been supplying flies for great causes and we had a bushel of trips offered at the Spring Fundraiser. But any trip or flies would be a most welcome addition to this year's auction.

We'll have more details on Meicher Madness in our September Newsletter. Please think how you could help make the revival of a fun event successful.

– Topf Wells

# Save Badger Mill Creek

By Topf Wells



Badger Mill Creek (BMC) is an improving Class 2 trout stream that runs through Verona and joins the Sugar River just upstream of River Road. SWTU has provided volunteer hours, funds and advocacy for over 30 years to improve BMC. It offers lots of public fishing, has a healthy population of wild brown trout, and, according to the latest DNR study, has an excellent chance of becoming a Class 1 stream if habitat is improved.

BMC's health and the progress it's made are now under attack. We need to protect the creek as best we can.

A key reason BMC has improved is the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) the water it contributes to the creek in the form of highly treated and aerated effluent. DNR fisheries and water quality staff have documented the improvements that's made to increased and stable water flows and trout habitat. In some key aspects the water acts like a huge spring.

MMSD wants to stop the water as an easy and cheap way to comply with DNR phosphorus regulations. It has other affordable and practical alternatives such as treating the effluent to remove more phosphorus or pursuing Adaptive Management (AM) across the BMC and Upper Sugar watersheds. AM involves MMSD working with local governments, conservation organizations, farmers and developers to reduce urban and rural runoff. That's the approach MMSD has taken in the Yahara Watershed.

CARPC, Dane County's Regional Planning Commission, now reviews MMSD's choice and recommends disapproval or approval to the DNR, which makes the final decision. **CARPC will hold its only public hearing on the case on July 11 at 6 PM at the Town of Verona Town Hall at 7669 County Highway PD.**

**The SWTU Board respectfully asks that you contact CARPC and ask that they DISAPPROVE MMSD's request to stop the discharge of water to Badger Mill Creek.**

You must email CARPC BY JULY 10 at: [tanyas@capitalarearpc.org](mailto:tanyas@capitalarearpc.org).

I apologize for the short notice but I have asked CARPC and the DNR for clarification on the issues CARPC will consider and have yet to receive an answer. We cannot wait any longer.

While the MMSD process and proposal are wrong in many ways, this matter is complex. For an excellent and thorough discussion of the issues [please read the June 27 article in the Verona Press](#).

CARPC has indicated that it will not find form letters helpful on this issue. This is a big ask of you but please take the time to write your own email. The Verona Press article outlines some key issues; another excellent source is the Friends of Badger Mill Creek website: [friendsofbadgermillcreek.com/](http://friendsofbadgermillcreek.com/)

## Some key points:

The harm the loss of water will cause the creek. One example is that the DNR Water Quality biologist said that the upper part of the creek that holds trout and on which Dane County installed stream improvements costing over \$200,000 may only be able to support warmwater forage fish. The County structures will often be out of the water and ineffective. MMSD's own consultant noted that the loss of water will probably harm brown trout reproduction.

The loss of water is huge – somewhere around 30% of current flow. A team of experts and advocates studying ways to mitigate this loss of water and the harm to the creek has not developed any viable option to offset this loss.

BMC is an important and unique resource in Dane County's fast growing metro area.

We also encourage members to attend the hearing in person or via Zoom. [Find the meeting details, including links to attend remotely, here.](#)

We're not alone in the fight to save Badger Mill Creek. The Friends of Badger Mill Creek, the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association, and the City of Verona have been staunch in our defense of the creek.

Thanks for your patience in reading this and your willingness to help Badger Mill Creek.

## We're Not Sugar; We Didn't Melt

By Topf Wells

The forecast was a 27% chance of showers, with those being light and scattered for the last work day of the spring. Just a little off, 100% with occasionally heavy rain. But 12 SWTU volunteers had gathered at Sawmill Creek with rain gear and determination (Sally had another name for it when I returned home).

So we plunged into the mostly light rain and invasive honeysuckle thickets and emerged an hour and a half later mostly triumphant. The best water on the Pokorny easement is now visible and fishable, lots of material is ready to be brush bundled this fall, and some nice native plants now have room to grow. As a bonus, the two Jims (Hess and O'Brien) also eliminated more invasives, Dame's Rocket and the persistently dreadful Wild Parsnip.



One of the stars of the day was Steve Fabos, the owner of Indigenous Restoration and expert sawyer. He's helped secure several easements around Sawmill and has helped Meg Pokorny pursue a holistic restoration of her land and property. Meg and April Prussia, Steve's wife and pork savant, had brats, brownies, cookies and fruit waiting for us in a dry shed after the work day. They qualify as angels of the day.

Again we had a nice showing of work day veterans and folks pretty new to the effort. The chainsawing was tough. Steve said that old, gnarly, and big clumps of honeysuckle are tough. Something about the fiber of the wood can pop a chain off. Steve, John Freborg, and Curt Riedl did a great job under difficult conditions. Hauling wasn't easy. Much of the honeysuckle had decided to grow on steep, increasingly slippery banks. We all hung in there and did not fall into the creek-- not that it would have made much difference.

Huge thanks to Meg for her hospitality and the care she shows for the natural resources around this wonderful creek. She and Bill, her husband have been generous in selling the easement to the DNR and in their support of SWTU. And to Steve and April, not only for today but for their years of advocacy for conservation and responsible agriculture.

Jim now takes a break from his superb organization and leadership of our work days. He deserves some fun fishing trips and a quiet summer on his and Marci's prairie and savanna. Jim, thank you for a wonderful spring of worthwhile and fun stream conservation.

Photos courtesy Jim Hess. [Find more in the story on swtu.org.](#)

## Help Dell Creek and the Aldo Leopold Chapter ... ... and See 20 professionally operated chainsaws in action.

On September 19 at 8 AM the Aldo Leopold Chapter will host a work day at the 40 acres on Dell Creek that the Leopold Chapter, SWTU, the Badger Fly Fishers, the State Council Access Fund, and Groundswell Conservancy helped purchase. The property is lovely with a long stretch of the stream, a brook trout tributary, and some extremely healthy oak uplands. It's also almost impossible to fish because of the streamside tag alders.

That's about to change big time. The Leopold Chapter has won the services of the 20 person Stihl Chainsaw Crew for a half day of work. 20 professionally trained sawyers with the latest and best of Stihl chainsaws-- that will be a most impressive and instructive sight. To utilize such an amazing workforce, the Leopold Chapter needs folks to haul the brush. They asking nearby chapters for help.

Dell Creek is about an hour drive from Madison and 9/19 falls on a Thursday and 8 AM is an early start time. But, if you can find the time to help, please do so. The Leopold Chapter will provide a nice lunch, you'll meet some really nice and committed fellow TU members, and you'll see a beautiful stream and landscape that we helped preserve.

We'll furnish more details as they become available.

## 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.](#)

## 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.)

## Thank you, David Rowe

David Rowe has left his Fish Supervisor position at the Southern District of the DNR and will become the Lake Management Supervisor for Dane County. That is great news for Madison's lakes; David has a superb knowledge of those lakes and some great ideas for maintaining and improving the fisheries. We offer him TU's best wishes for a wonderful new phase of his career.

And our thanks. One of David's great contributions to the health and fishability of our trout streams was the team of excellent biologists he assembled. They are a joy to work with and they did not just appear in their jobs out of thin air. He worked with TU DAR to assemble the team that improves access and control invasive vegetation on trout stream easements throughout southwest Wisconsin. He planned the new Black Earth Creek project east of Cross Plains which will improve the habitat, fishability, and access to the stream.

Thank you, David, and good luck!

## Carp Conversation – Free event

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 link to cool content

- 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!

Steven Schroeder  
Patrick Trafton  
Terry Saunders

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!)

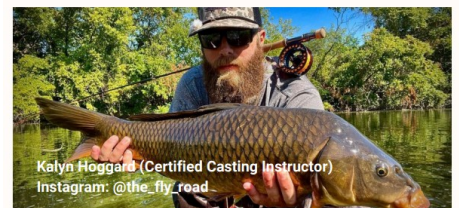
**LINWORKERS**  
next generation fly fishers

### 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](mailto: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

The technology of fly tying took a giant leap forward in 2,640 BC when, according to legend, a Chinese Empress named Leizu discovered that the natural glue of silkworm cocoons could be softened in hot water and a long thin filament of pure silk unwound from each cocoon. Twisting several such filaments together produced a thread of remarkable strength and beauty. Leizu later invented the silk loom and established China's first commercial silk enterprise, thus earning her a title of reverence, 'The Goddess of Silk'. Silk is wonderfully shiny and lustrous, and silken goods were in great demand by Western civilizations. Chinese methods of silk production and processing, though, were state secrets for over 3,000 (!) years. China was the sole supplier of silks, and a lucrative international trade developed to meet Near Eastern and European demands. This "Silk Road" lasted over 2,000 years and profoundly influenced global human history.

The words "silk" and "thread" were synonymous for much of fly tying history. Ounce for ounce, silk threads are stronger than threads spun of other natural fibers. Silk was the thread of choice for fly tying until it was replaced by synthetic threads (e.g. polyester and nylon) in the mid-20th century. The most famous of all silk-tied trout flies are undoubtedly the soft-hackled spiders and wingless wets of the English north, because silk is a major element of their basic design. Bodies of North Country flies consist of silk alone or silk covered with a thin veneer of natural fur. The design imitates translucency of natural insects better than any other method. Light passes *through* wet silk and reflects off an underlying hook. When wet, North Country flies glow as if lit by an inner fire. No other materials – synthetics included – can match the translucency of silk-bodied flies. The color of silk darkens when wet, but such changes were taken into account by North Country fly designers.

Perhaps the most famous of all North Country flies is

### ----- Orange Partridge -----

The Orange Partridge recipe below is from Edmonds & Lee, *Brook and River Trouting* (1916). Vary the hook size to match natural mayflies. A mottled brown feather of any game bird (woodcock, grouse, etc.) is a good substitute for partridge on smaller hooks.

**Hook:** Wet fly / nymph, #14

**Thread:** Pearsall's Gossamer silk, orange (#6A)

**Body:** Orange silk

**Rib:** Fine gold wire, about four turns (optional)

**Wings:** Hackled with a brown mottled (not barred) feather from a Partridge's neck or back.

**Head:** Orange silk

the Orange Partridge (aka. Partridge & Orange), which first appeared by name in William Pilling's *A List of Flies for ye River Wharfe* (1794). Flies don't stay famous for 200 years unless they are effective, and the Orange Partridge is one of history's finest. Fish it either deeply as a nymph or near the surface as an emerger or cripple. The Orange Partridge is tied of Pearsall's Gossamer silk, color #6A (Orange), which is one of about two dozen Pearsall's colors dyed specifically for fly tyers. English anglers have long paid great attention to color in fly fishing (probably too much attention), and Pearsall's responded by developing a veritable rainbow of subtle olive, yellow, ginger, brown, orange, and red-hued threads. Pearsall's Gossamer is the thinnest of all silks, being about 7/0 on the confusing 'ought' scale. It is the acclaimed standard for tying classic salmon flies, spiders, and both winged and wingless wet flies.

Pearsall's as a company was established in 1795 as "Pearsall and Green" in central London by "silkmens" James Pearsall and William Green. Their shop on Cheapside (St.) supplied wholesale and retail silks primarily for the embroidery, lace making, knitting, and weaving trades. The company changed names to "James Pearsall & Co." in 1865 and moved to Taunton in southwest England. The excellence of Pearsall's silks for fly tying was discussed in print as early as 1841 (E. Chitty, *The Fly-Fisher's Textbook*). Generations of English and American fly tyers used Pearsall's Gossamer, including such greats as Halford, Kelson, Marryat, Skues, Edmonds & Lee, Mottram, Woolley, Jennings, and Leisenring, to name a few.

Alas, the march of time has not been as kind to James Pearsall & Co. as it has to the Orange Partridge. After 230 years of supplying the finest silk threads, production of Gossamer and other Pearsall's silks ceased about two years ago. Retail inventories have dwindled, and popular colors of Gossamer are now difficult to source. Alternative silk threads are available, but none have the same subtle colors, none are the same fine size, and none are intertwined with two centuries of fly tying history quite like Pearsall's Gossamer.

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## 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](mailto:madkasel@gmail.com)**

### Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

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