

Newscasts

October 2024 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



DNR Extravaganza: Two High-energy Presentations at our October 8 Meeting

First up: Interns on a Summer of Learning, Fun and Help For Our Streams

The DNR Water Quality and Fish Biologists in this area needed interns to complete their vital summer streams surveys this year. And their budget was a bit too sparse to hire them.

SWTU and our good friends at the Smallmouth Alliance were happy to help. Emma Bailie and Jonah Hoepfer, the two interns, spent the summer with the biologists and technicians in surveying trout and smallmouth streams and other streams that should or might hold trout and SMBs. They saw more water than most of us will see in several years. They had fun, faced challenges and learned from some great DNR folks. And, thanks to them, we'll know much more about streams in our area.

They'll present a fast paced account of what they encountered this summer and answer questions. Joining them will be Kim Kuber and Camille Bruhn, the water quality biologists who supervised much of their work in the field.

Both Emma and Jonah attend UW-Platteville. Emma is a 4th year biology major with an emphasis in ecology, and she plans to be a fisheries biologist. Emma's favorite activities are fishing and hiking. Jonah is a second-year environmental science major. He is not quite sure on a career yet, but mostly likely something with fish. Jonah's favorite activities are fly fishing and hiking.

Second up: Helping Trout Creek Continue Living Up To Its Name

Justin Haglund is a fisheries biologist for the Wisconsin DNR, stationed out of the Dodgeville office covering both Iowa and Richland counties. He has been in this role since 2017, managing the diverse fisheries we have to offer in SW Wisconsin. Before this position, he worked for the office of applied science with the Wisconsin DNR, covering fisheries research projects across the state. He received his B.S. degree in biology from the University of Wisconsin Platteville and his M.S. degree in Fisheries from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point.

Justin will be presenting the upcoming trout relocation project on Trout Creek in Iowa County. This project will focus on removing and relocating Brown Trout from the upper reaches of Trout Creek. Historically, this trout fishery contained an excellent population of Brown and Brook Trout. Over the years, habitat degradation has impacted this fishery and the Brown Trout have surpassed the Brook Trout population and now dominate the fishery. Given the dry dam that separates upper and lower Trout Creek, an excellent opportunity exists to restore our native Brook Trout. Project goals and plans for this relocation will be discussed along with an excellent volunteer opportunity for chapter members.

Also note: The Trout Creek article at the bottom of page 3 of this newsletter.

The photos are from a similar successful project last year at Melancthon Creek, where many SWTU volunteers helped make a real difference.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m., but show up anytime after 5:30 to order food, drinks and socialize.

[Schwoegler's Lanes, 444 Grand Canyon Dr., Madison, WI 53719](#)



Meicher Madness Auction Makes Money, Memories

A large crowd of volunteers, buyers, donors – and the indefatigable Topf Wells at the center of it all – created a high-energy, fun and profitable event. More than \$4,000 was raised and we moved some great or serviceable gear from the uselessness of storage into the hands of anglers. Maybe the best part of the evening was the surge of young folks, almost all of whom were new to the Chapter. Many thanks to everyone who attended – you made a difference!

Workday Winners

Here are the winners of this year's workday volunteer drawing, which was held before the Meicher Auction.

Musky Fool \$50 gift card	Kathleen Falk
D&S \$50 gift card	Dyan Lesnik
D&S \$50 Gift Card	Pete Dailey
8' 3/4wt Fiberglass Rod built by Dave Fowler	Dale Osthoff

Sorry if you are not one of the winners, but we are all winners by helping to keep our trout streams healthy and accessible. – Jim Hess

New and Old: A Great Combination

By Topf Wells

SWTU's first workday of the fall/winter cycle was a challenge. We had to finish the last clearing and brush bundling on Hefty Creek's Rudd easement in one day. Jim Hess had originally scheduled two but Dane County has some projects in mind for 10/12.

We did it with quite a varied cast of workers. Top of the list were Scott Harpold and Vince Schmitz, the biologists who are the heart of the DNR's stream restoration crew in this part of the state. They worked all morning and showed us the latest brush bundling techniques. Vince shared possibly the most unique "DNR Biologist Catches a Cool Fish while on Official Business" story ever during our break. He was on site at the Big Green River after the recent flood and noticed what he thought was a fish in a puddle stranded 8 ft. above the stream. He rescued a still healthy 12 inch burbot, a great native WI fish, happy to be in the cool, clean water of the Big Green. (See what you miss at these workdays!)

Some of our veteran sawyers could not attend but Mike Meier saved the day. Mike would be the starting pitcher on the SWTU All Star Team. He furnished all the wood and brush the bundles needed. BTW, Mike has volunteered hundreds and perhaps thousands of hours to reclaim a 70 acre oak savanna and other native habitats Dane County's Silverwood Park in SE Dane County, just north of Edgerton. That would make a lovely fall day trip; a healthy oak savanna is a beautiful and rare site/sight in southern Wisconsin.

A good showing of regulars appeared including Kim Licitar, who continues to drive in from Jefferson County, which he mournfully describes as the Trout Desert of Wisconsin. Dyan and Wayne brought our new trailer, that holds all we need and is easier to maneuver and tow. Bob Rudd, the landowner, has always joined us on the workdays at his easement. We gave his new knee a workout and it passed the test.

We asked if any Blackhawk Chapter members would help and Mark Wirfs and Keevin Quillen, the Rockford Twins, arrived and were prime reasons we finished. They were in the stream by 9 and installed more logs and brush than anyone. No more jokes from me about Illini trout anglers ever again. These guys were tireless and strong. The DNR continues to refine its brush bundle plan and they had us driving long stakes horizontally in the bank to provide a better frame and lateral support for the brush. This necessitates someone wielding a sledgehammer sort of like a bat. Everytime I looked, one of the Rockford guys was swinging the hammer.

Two other DNR employees made this day safer and more productive. Mitch Trow and Lloyd Meng used the brush mower to clear out an area for us to cut, move material, and install the bundle. I think any volunteer at this workday would opine that the mower was a great SWTU donation to the DNR.



Jim Hess deserves even more thanks than usual (and that's a lot). This was a tough day to organize and he was clearly concerned about the need to finish in one day if at all possible. Thanks to a great crew, some unexpected but most welcome help, and DNR expertise, we did it with only 30 minutes of overtime. We don't get time and a half but we did enjoy brownies, pork sticks and Dyan's fabulous pumpkin/chocolate chip muffins.

Photos courtesy Dyan Lesnik. [See more in the story on swtu.org.](#)

Join us for an Upcoming Workday

By Jim Hess, Conservation Chair

We've had a strong start to the fall and need every helping hand we can get for our remaining workdays. The work is straightforward and no experience is needed ... you'll be an expert in no time. It's a great way to meet people, learn about streams and make a real difference for our coldwater resource.

October 12, 2024 – Falk Wells Sugar River Wildlife Unit

Time: 9am to 12 noon (Sawyers – must have completed a chainsaw safety course and have all safety gear – please arrive at 8:30).

Where: Falk Wells Sugar River Wildlife Area. Take Hwy 69 south out of Verona, about 2 miles south of Hwy 151. It is located just south of Sunset Rd, across the bridge and to your left. We will meet at the parking lot just south of the bridge.

Here is the Google Link to this location: <https://goo.gl/maps/5UEZxQ5LrJkNBiPc9>

What: We will be clearing invasive brush and box elders along the streambank. This area was cleared by a forestry mower, but the mower could not get to the brush along the streambank. Burn piles will be created, which will be burned this winter. We will also be checking for any re-sprouts from previous workdays at this site. Bring: Work gloves, sturdy shoes, eye and ear protection, and reusable water bottles that can be filled from our 5-gal water jug. Stay hydrated. Also, there may be some wet spots, bring your rubber boots if you have them.

Parking: There is plenty of parking at the parking lot on Hwy 69, a pickup will be used to access the workday, hauling equipment and some personnel.

Future Workdays:

Oct. 19 – Big Spring (Iowa County, 5465 Big Spring Road) – This is a joint workday with the Nohr Chapter removing box elders and willows. Only one week from the Falk/Wells workday, but couldn't be avoided. Please plan accordingly, there is a lot of work to be done and it is a beautiful spot to enjoy the beautiful fall weather. This work site is located in a beautiful wooded valley near Spurgeon Vineyards & Winery. Unless you know this area, it may be difficult to find. The Fire Code is 5465 Big Spring Road, Town of Highland, which can be entered into your phone. The Google Map Link is <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WabkPHPkFyWHqj6c8>. Go to Cobb, then north on STH 80 to Highland, take County Rd Q west for about 2 miles, then turn right on Big Spring Rd and go 1 mile to our worksite.

Nov 9 – Sawmill Creek (Green County, Hay Hollow Rd) – Removing invasive woodies and box elders. This site is located at located in Green County near N8584 Hay Hollow Rd, which is about 4 miles east of Blanchardville on County Rd H, then north on Hay Hollow Rd. Here is a Google Map Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/FiBSqCDbWjr9gx6J7>

Dec 7 – Conley Lewis (Iowa County, Banner Road) – This is another joint workday with the Nohr Chapter, removing box elders and invasive woodies. There is a lot of work to be done, especially by our sawyers. This site is located northwest of Hollandale, near the intersection of Hwy 191 & Banner Rd. The work area is located on the north side of the bridge on Banner Rd – we will be working upstream. Here is a Google Map Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/aNdKkj5871GrysSr9>

SWTU supports DNR plans for improving Trout Creek (Iowa County). Volunteers needed on October 21-24 to help relocate Brown Trout.

By Henry Nehls-Lowe

As noted on page 1, join us at the October 8th SWTU chapter meeting, when Justin Haglund, DNR Fisheries Senior Biologist, will present on a recently released trout stream survey and assessment report that includes the status and upcoming plans for Trout Creek ("[Trout Management and Status Report for the Mill and Rush Creek Watersheds](#)").

Less than an hour from Madison, Trout Creek was once an extremely popular stream among some of SWTU's finest and most discerning anglers. "During the 1970s and 80s, Trout Creek was a cherished fishery," writes Steve Born. "Close to the metro area, and with wonderful hatches, it was a perfect place to sneak away for an afternoon. For many of us, it was our 'secret' home waters. But habitat improvements suffered shortened lives from siltation and erosion, along with beaver activity in the upper reaches of the creek – and over time the fishery deteriorated."

One of DNR's goals is increasing the abundance of Brook Trout in upper Trout Creek, upstream of the dry dam barrier, by habitat improvement and relocating Brown Trout to lower Trout Creek. Other goals for Trout Creek are 3.5 miles of stream restoration on the upper stretch and the lower stretch, where relocated Brown Trout will be placed and expected to become more abundant with the improvements.

Justin said, "This is a valuable and worthwhile endeavor. When I started working on Trout Creek with the research department back in 2012, the reach along Trout Creek where Arneson Creek flows in was almost entirely Brook Trout (and nice fish too!). Since then, the Brook Trout population has severely declined and we are lucky to see a handful in that stretch. Given the decline in both Brook and Brown Trout abundance, along with cold temperatures and excellent spring input, I believe Brook Trout can do very well in Trout Creek...in the absence of Browns. Another excellent opportunity here is to potentially establish another broodstock source since the genetics in the past have come back as 'native'."

The SWTU board strongly supports Justin's plans for improving Trout Creek, including Brown Trout relocation and stream restoration. And Steve Born agrees, "This is an attractive opportunity to establish a strong wild brook trout fishery in our region – one we should undertake under Justin's guidance and scientific follow-up."

The SWTU Board carefully considered Justin's report and plan before supporting it. Despite Trout Creek's decline, some anglers still fish it and often in the stretch from which Brown Trout will be removed. While miles of public water and the transplanted Brown Trout will await below the dry dam, no one wants to lose a favorite fishing spot. In this case, though, the Board believes the decline of Trout Creek and the opportunities to revive it are worth that loss. Justin will also need TU volunteers for the Brown Trout removal and relocation on October 21-24. He'll provide the details at our meeting.

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.)

Smaller Trailer and Storage Unit Mean Savings

The Board works to get the most out of every dollar. Our former trailer for hauling saws and other gear to workdays worked great but was bigger than needed ... meaning the storage unit for it had to be bigger (about as costly as one can be). The Board acted to trade in the big trailer for a smaller one and move things into a smaller storage unit. The new trailer is easier to tow and the new storage unit will save money every month going forward – money that can go toward our coldwater resource.

There are MANY to thank for this, but we'd like to call out Mark Maffit in particular for driving this issue and doing the critical research that helped guide the board to its decision. Jim Hess, Dyan Lesnik and her husband, Wayne Griffin, also played key roles. Pictured and helping with the move are Jim, Dyan, Wayne, Steve Musser, Don Golembiewski and Michael Westbury. These and other members also helped look at trailers and storage units, prepare the old trailer for trade-in, load the new trailer, organize gear to auction off or move and about a dozen other necessary actions. Thank you all!!

We also thank **WowGee print shop** for donating the expertise and materials to brand the trailer. Come check it out at an upcoming workday!



Register Now for Neonics Forum: October 30

Have you been wondering if our local hatches are diminishing and fewer than in the past? So have we. For that reason, the State Council of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited applied for and received a grant from the Department of Natural Resources to hold a forum on the impacts of the use of neonicotinoids, a common pesticide used widely in Wisconsin that is 30 times more powerful than DDT. Please join us on October 30 at the Discovery Center on 330 North Orchard Street in Madison to hear noted national and state experts discuss this topic and what might be done to limit its harmful impacts. Registration information is at: CleanWisconsin.org/neonic-forum (click on the flyer at right for a PDF version)

Quick links to cool content

- [Interesting Article on Badger Mill Creek](#): The Capital Times interviewed SWTU's Topf Wells and several others for a good look at the issues surrounding Badger Mill Creek.
- Do you have an eagle eye for eagles? Learn more about [Bald Eagle Nest Watch](#) and some simple, fun ways you can help these magnificent feathered friends.

Vets on the Fly Activities

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.](#)

Tough News but Still Hope for Allen Creek

By Topf Wells

Please read [the recent assessment on the Allen and Liberty Creeks watershed](#) by Dan Oele and Mitch Trow. Ouch, this one hurts. Liberty Creek really no longer functions as a trout stream and will be declassified. Too many row crops where the water temps are cool and water is too warm where the creek flows through public lands. Water temps are the limiting factor for Allen Creek, caused by the dam that forms Evansville's Lake Leota. That lake is the center of a lovely and beloved Evansville park. It features lots of neat stuff and the pond itself offers good warmwater fishing. But it costs the creek. Mitch has provided some additional observations on Allen and therein lies the hope. The stream has excellent habitat and pleasant fishing where it flows through the Public Hunting Area. The DNR will continue to monitor the creek and explore ways of mitigating the temps that sometimes get too high in the summer.

SWTU Member Discounts at D&S

Pat Hasburgh is a longtime SWTU member and former Board Member .. and the owner of D&S Bait, Tackle and Fly Shop. Pat's offered some great fly gear and flies at very reasonable prices since he opened. He's steadily been building up a fly tying department. To celebrate, Pat is offering a 10% discount for SWTU members on any fly or spin gear in the shop. Pat has generously supported SWTU with many donations. Stop by and see what he has to offer.

Welcome New Members

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

Jacob Gottfried

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.

Wisconsin Neonic Forum Registration open!

Neonicotinoids, or neonics, are the most widely used insecticides in Wisconsin, applied to millions of acres of agricultural and urban land each year. What benefits do they provide and what risks do they pose?

OCTOBER 30
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

DeLuca Forum at the UW-Madison
Discovery Center
330 N Orchard St, Madison, WI

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- What neonicotinoids are and where these chemicals are used in Wisconsin
- Economic benefits of neonicotinoid use
- Risks to the environment
- Wisconsin's oversight of neonicotinoids
- Regulatory approaches from other states and countries

Please register by October 20
CleanWisconsin.org/neonic-forum

Fountains of Youth

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

by Rusty Dunn

What is your absolute favorite trout fly? The fly that catches trout for you on any stream, day after day, week after week, month after month, throughout the season? If you were mandated to carry but a single fly pattern, what would fill your fly box? Many experienced anglers, including both everyday fly fishers and distinguished experts, would opt for a Pheasant Tail Nymph. The Pheasant Tail is one of history's greatest flies; perhaps THE greatest fly. A prominent online vendor of commercial trout flies today offers no fewer than 36 variations of the venerable Pheasant Tail. It's for good reason; the fly is simply a trout-catching magnet.

Most fly anglers rightfully credit Englishman Frank Sawyer for designing and popularizing the Pheasant Tail Nymph, which was first published in Sawyer's 1958 book *Nymphs and the Trout*. Among the dozens or hundreds of Pheasant Tail variations currently in circulation, Sawyer's design is unquestionably "The Granddaddy of Them All". Ahh, but every granddaddy descends from a great granddaddy, who in turn descends from a great, great granddaddy. The genealogy of today's fly designs can be difficult to decipher, but that of Sawyer's Pheasant Tail Nymph is fairly straightforward. It descends from Englishman Payne Collier's "Pheasant Tail" dry fly, which originated in 1895, more than a decade before Sawyer was even born. The defining feature of authentic Pheasant Tails is an abdomen and thorax of rooster-pheasant center-tail feather barbs wrapped about a hook shank and reinforced with fine wire. Pheasant feathers have been used for centuries in fly tying, but Collier's Pheasant Tail was the first fly (at least in print) with such a pheasant-wrapped body. Collier's fly was tailed and hackled with honey dun rooster hackle.

Collier published his Pheasant Tail pattern in an 1895 issue of *The Fishing Gazette*, which was a British weekly magazine dedicated exclusively to angling. First published in 1877 and continuing until 1966 (!), *The Fishing Gazette* was hugely popular among British anglers. Each issue consisted of angling news, fishing reports, opinion pieces,

instructional articles, fly pattern recipes, and a lengthy section of correspondence (sometimes flaming) among the readership. It was angling social media of the day! Collier's Pheasant Tail provoked considerable interest among readers, and active discussions about the fly ensued in the magazine. G.E.M. Skues, one of the most influential anglers of the time, entered the discussions and persuasively argued that Collier's Pheasant Tail likely imitates rusty spinners. Skues admired Collier's Pheasant Tail very much, and he often described it as the "Pheasant Tail Spinner". Skues tied both wet and dry versions of the fly and raved about the Pheasant Tail's effectiveness, especially the wet version when fished just below the surface during a BWO hatch or spinner fall. Skues' literary influence on early 20th century angling made the Pheasant Tail wildly popular, and variations of Collier's pattern proliferated.

Frank Sawyer studied this angling literature, corresponded with Skues, and tied a variation of the Pheasant Tail that he called a "Pheasant Tail Red Spinner". It was a dry fly similar to both Collier's and Skues' Pheasant Tails but tied of Rhode Island Red hackle in lieu of Collier's honey dun. Sawyer described the fateful day when inspiration struck like lightning and led to his design of the legendary Pheasant Tail Nymph. Sawyer was fishing a Pheasant Tail Red Spinner dry fly during a wonderful BWO hatch. Fishing was great, and Sawyer caught fish after fish. His dry fly, however, became so tattered and torn by trout that it lost all of its hackle. The fly no longer floated, yet it continued to catch trout, even better than when floating. Sawyer surmised that (i) hackle is irrelevant for success during such hatches and (ii) trout prefer nymphal stages drifting below the surface to dun or spinner stages drifting atop the surface. This "aha moment" prompted Sawyer to design his now-famous Pheasant Tail Nymph, which contains no hackle and is armored with wire to promote sinking.

If Sawyer's Pheasant Tail Nymph is "The Granddaddy of Them All", then Skues' Pheasant Tails should be the great granddaddy, and Payne Collier's Pheasant Tail the great, great granddaddy. And so it goes with trout fly ancestry and evolution. One great fly leads to the next, which in turn leads to the next, which ultimately leads to the many Pheasant Tail sons and daughters that we know so well today.

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----- The Original Pheasant Tail -----

Today's Pheasant Tail Nymphs descend from Payne Collier's Pheasant Tail dry fly published in 1895 in *The Fishing Gazette*.

Hook: Limerick bend, light wire, size to match natural

Thread: Not stated by Collier, but Skues tied the same fly with hot orange silk

Tail: Honey dun rooster hackle fibers

Body: Ruddy-brown rooster pheasant tail fibers

Rib: Fine gold twisted tinsel (substitute with fine gold wire)

Hackle: Honey dun 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

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