

# Newscasts

January 2025 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Updates for Wisconsin's Inland Trout Management

Join us for important and informative updates at our chapter meeting on January 14, 2025

Our 2025 meetings start with an important and timely topic, the future of Wisconsin's early inland trout season-- that's the one many of you will have enjoyed when we meet. The DNR is proposing to shorten the early season, allow the harvest of trout during the season, and start the regular season earlier. [Click here for a summary of the proposals.](#)

Some members have expressed concern over the proposal. Perhaps those concerns might be expressed as: *The early season is working just fine. Why fix what ain't broke?*

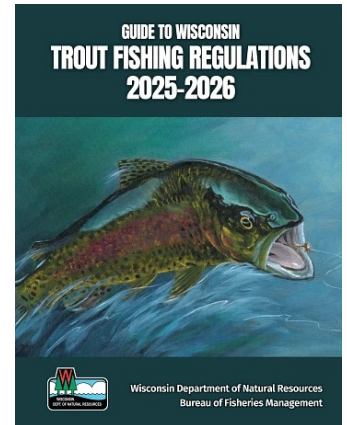
Bradd Sims, the DNR's Stream and River System Biologist, will discuss the DNR proposal and bring us up to date on other trout news. One of Bradd's duties as the System Biologist is to direct the inland trout program.

SWTU is happy to welcome Bradd. He was the long time biologist for several SW WI Counties and was responsible for some of our best and favorite waters, including the Big Green and the Blue River watershed. Due to many vacancies in the fish program, Bradd helped to manage just about all the streams in this neck of the woods at one time or another. He always did all he could for our coldwater resources. Jim Hess and he collaborated on a couple of great workdays on the Steiner Branch, a wonderful brook trout stream near Yellowstone State Park.

More about Bradd: He has worked as a fisheries biologist with the Wisconsin DNR for 26 years. Currently he is the stream and river systems biologist with the bureau of Fisheries Management out of Madison. Prior he spent 23 years as a fisheries biologist out of the Dodgeville office working in the Driftless Area where much of his time was devoted to the management of streams and rivers. When Bradd is not working he is spending time with his wife and two sons enjoying many of natural resources in Southwest Wisconsin.

We meet on Tuesday, January 14 at Schwoegler's on Grand Canyon Drive. Bradd's presentation will start about 7 with dinner and drinks available starting at 5:30.

*Schwoegler's Lanes, 444 Grand Canyon Dr., Madison, WI 53719*



## Spring Fundraiser Volunteers Needed

SWTU's Spring Fairs were very well received and successful fundraisers, and important for SWTU's solid financial status, but we are without a team to organize the 2025 event – can you step forward and help? Experienced members of the past Spring Fair committee can support this effort, but we need at least 2 or 3 key individuals to take the reins. If you are interested with helping coordinate this important SWTU fundraiser please contact John Freeborg or Steve Musser (contact info at the end of this newsletter). Thank you!



Based on new volunteers stepping up, the SWTU Board will decide at the January 25th board meeting on whether to hold the 2025 Spring Fair.



## Registration Open for the 2025 Women’s Fly Fishing Clinics

Please register now or share this with someone who may be interested. These fill up and we want our members to have an opportunity to take part in these groundbreaking clinics. (Check out the article just below and [this one from October](#) about this year’s successful clinics.)

There are two types of clinics detailed below with links and QR codes for more information. Both are set in Westby, WI (near Viroqua, in Wisconsin’s Driftless Area) and the cost is \$355 until April 1, 2025, and \$375 after that.

### Basics Clinic By Women For Women: June 13-15, 2025

Learn how to choose proper equipment, tie knots, cast, read water, select the proper fly and time on the water. You will learn new tactics, regardless of your level of ability. Equipment available for use.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/WWFFCBasics>



### On the Water Skills Clinic – Intermediate: June 11-13, 2025

Personalized instruction streamside. Tune up workshops by women instructors to refresh skills in casting, matching the hatch & reading the water. Fish WI finest trout streams with experienced anglers.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/WOWSCi>



[This flyer](#) has info on both events, and you can also learn more [here on swtu.org](http://www.swtu.org).

### Trip testimonials:

- [I attended the Wisconsin Women’s “On the Water” Fly Fishing Clinic’s ... it was FANTASTIC!](#)
- [The accidental River Buddy](#)

And be sure to register for this amazing opportunity!



**Women’s Intro to Fly Fishing Clinic**  
 Taught by Wisconsin Women’s Fly Fishing  
[www.swtu.org/learn/womens-flyfishing-clinic/](http://www.swtu.org/learn/womens-flyfishing-clinic/)

Feb 1, 2025 9:30-4:30 pm  
 1 N Main St, Oshkosh, WI 54901  
 \$21, Includes lunch, Gear Provided

Register :  
[WomenFlyFishingIntro.eventbrite.com](http://WomenFlyFishingIntro.eventbrite.com)

**Sponsored by**  
 Wisconsin State Trout Unlimited

### Classes full: Trout Unlimited Fly-Tying Courses – 2025

The past months of promotion have filled both classes to the brim! Sorry if you missed out, but there’s always next year.

## A Great End to a Great Season

By Topf Wells

Jim Hess and Ted Swenson called for a big turnout of sawyers and haulers for our last '24 work day. We needed everyone for the clumps of box elder lining Conley Lewis Creek upstream of its confluence with the Dodge Branch. Twenty one of us answered the call and we were joined by Jusitin Halgludn, DNR fish biologist, and his two techs.

We had about 8 or 10 experienced sawyers, which led to extraordinary productivity. The haulers were hauling ass to keep up. Conley Lewis now looks very different and much better.

Access will be much better. More importantly, instead of row crops on the edge of the stream, the easement from the stream edge outward will be planted in a mix of perennial grasses as directed by Justin. That cover will grow better without the box elders and will stabilize the stream banks and reduce runoff. As we now know, those row crops will not be contributing neonics to the stream. Let's hope some Hendricksons are left to proliferate.

Most of us were veterans of work days and would agree, I think, that this was one of our most productive days.

SWTU and Nohr treated everyone pretty well. Nohr always raffles off a great collection of flies; the box today contained Tom Mulford caddis (please check my spelling) and Ted's stoneflies. In the holiday spirit, SWTU offered Phil Anderson's collection of early spring favorites. We had two extremely happy winners. Dyan outdid herself with her homemade (her Mom's recipe) triple ginger cookies. Pork sticks and brownies contributed to the caloric replenishment of our hard working volunteers.

Included in the turnout were many officers and board members from SWTU and Nohr. Way to go and thanks. Most earnest and sincere thanks to Jim Hess, Ted Swenson, and Justin Haglund. These days require lots of planning and organization and those three provided it. They have to think of details that would easily escape most of us. An example: with that many sawyers we needed more spray bottles with which to treat the stumps. Jim made sure we had them.

Jim noted that every year he schedules the last work day of the year in early December with the need to avoid the gun deer season and the end of Badger football. Despite his concern over an early onslaught of winter, each December work day has had nearly perfect conditions, as did today. Now that Jim has mentioned and I've reported that, we'll probably have a blizzard next year.

But that's next year. Jim has earned several weeks off before he plans our spring work days and our most profound thanks for another great year of fun and work. These work days are one of SWTU's best activities and they simply would not happen without Jim's dedication and expertise.

Dyan and Jim took a ton of great photos, which [you can see in this online album](#).

## Winter Work on Black Earth Creek

Kyle Olivencia just informed us that the DNR brushing crew has begun clearing the excessive brush along Black Earth Creek upstream of Scherbl Road. They're scheduled for 5 days of brushing at that location. This is the crew that SWTU and other chapters in our area have supported for several years.



## Remembering John Schweiger

John Schweiger died on January 1; his [obituary is available online with details for services on January 25](#).

SWTU cherishes John as a great member and leader. He and Rose, his wonderful wife, were partners in organizing SWTU's Special Fishing Day for Disabled Children, one of our most popular and worthwhile activities for many years. They were the folks who greeted and sold or took the tickets of guests at many SWTU events, including the Icebreakers. They were key organizers of many of the Meicher Auctions. John also served as our Treasurer.

John was a huge UW men and women's basketball fan. Before he turned 18, he volunteered for the Army and served in Vietnam. He spent most of his professional career in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

John served and improved his nation and his community in many ways. SWTU was extraordinarily blessed in being one of John's communities and the beneficiary of his kindness and good deeds.



***Pictured:** John and Rose in 2018 receiving SWTU's prestigious Pass Lake Award honoring "A legacy of service advancing the conservation of our natural resource now and for future generations."*

## Wisconsin Trout Unlimited 2025 Youth Fishing Camp

As noted in the latest issue of *Wisconsin Trout*, registration opens February 1 for the annual WI TU Youth Camp, which will be held August 14-17 this year. The purpose of the camp is to provide the student with an introductory education of as many things possible related to trout fishing, sportsmanship, and conservation issue.

Each Wisconsin Trout Unlimited chapter can sponsor one applicant to the camp. If some chapters can't find an applicant, other chapters can sponsor a second applicant if space is available. Contact Steve Musser (contact info at the end of this newsletter) if you know of a youth between 12-16 who is interested.

## 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.)

We received a [nice certificate and note of appreciation from the DNR](#) for a recent donation to provide them with some tools for stream monitoring and surveying.



## Continued Engagement on Badger Mill Creek

The SWTU Board has sent a letter to the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District regarding the likely harm that their planned changes will do to Badger Mill Creek. The letter is available [here on our Google Drive](#). For more information, contact Topf Wells at [topfwells@gmail.com](mailto:topfwells@gmail.com).

## 2025 Wisconsin TU State Council Banquet Tickets

We have available to us a few free tickets to the [Wisconsin State Council Banquet](#) to be held in Oshkosh on Feb 1, 2025. This event is a lot of fun with some great auction items and also some inspirational presentation and wonderful food. If you have an interest in attending or want more info, please email [admin@swtu.org](mailto:admin@swtu.org).

## 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.](#)

## Fox Valley TU Cabin Fever Days

Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New location: Tanners Bar & Grill, Kimberly, Wisconsin

This is a tremendous TU chapter that has often supported our chapter and its events. This looks to be an amazing day of informational sessions, lunch, gear sales, auctions and a chance to go home with a stellar bamboo rod. Learn more and plan to attend: <https://foxvalleytu.org/cabin-fever-day-2025/>



## It's Looking Golden on the Blue

The Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of TU published its [2024 Blue River Project Report](#). It's well worth your time and filled with great pictures and information on some very important restoration work.

## Welcome New Members

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

Joey Dunscombe  
Anders Larson

Adam Houzner  
Carol Schlatter

John Mayers  
Andrew Simon

Khon Xiong

We are honored to have you among us. Please join our next meeting 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.

## Fountains of Youth

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

by Rusty Dunn

Trout feeding on tiny insects at the surface of glassy smooth water is one of the most challenging situations you'll ever encounter. Trout at the surface are exposed to predators, and "spooky" barely begins to describe their cautious behavior. Trout vision is acute at the surface, and every aspect of your approach and presentation is scrutinized. If anything is amiss, trout simply refuse the offering or, worse, flee to the depths below for safety. Quiet wading, long leaders, fine tip-pets, good presentations, and flies that match the size of naturals are important. Such conditions can bring even expert anglers to their knees, literally as part of a stealthy approach and figuratively for the ensuing frustration of being unable to raise a single trout among dozens of risers.

English author Edward Jesse coined in *An Angler's Rambles* (1836) a well-deserved term for the nearly invisible insects that make such conditions difficult. He called the insects "fisherman's curses" to reflect the profanity-laced but usually futile attempts of anglers to imitate the naturals. In the literature, 'curses' refers to several groups of small insects, including chironomids (called 'midges' in the US and 'smuts' in the UK), aquatic gnats, tiny mayflies (e.g. genera *Caenis* and *Tricorythodes*), and others. Curses may be small, but what they lack in size, they overcome with numbers. Curses hatch by the millions and can at times be the most abundant food source available, especially on tailwater and spring creek fisheries. Trout often gorge on curses to the exclusion of all else. Author C.E. Walker described in *Old Flies in New Dresses* (1897) the difficulty of angling when fisherman's curses are abundant:

*"As every fisherman knows, when the trout or grayling are feeding on (curses), it is generally impossible to get them to take the imitation of any other fly."*

Curses earned their reputation for difficulty, in part,

because sufficiently small hooks were not available until recent decades. The smallest commercial hooks around 1900 (size "000 midget" hooks) were similar to today's #17 or #18, which is way too big for many curse imitations. True midge-sized hooks (#22 to #28) appeared in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Following development of thin, strong, nylon leaders about the same time, successful fishing of midge imitations became a realistic endeavor. Although the term "midge" strictly describes species of chironomids, the term "midge fishing" more generally means "small insects - small flies" to lots of anglers. The cursing continues today, however, due to the frustrations of fishing tiny flies to selective trout under exacting conditions.

Vince Marinaro popularized small flies in his influential 1950 book *A Modern Dry Fly Code*. Marinaro, along with Charlie Fox, Ed Shenk, and Ed Koch, established over the ensuing couple of decades a distinctly American tradition of fishing tiny flies on the spring creeks of central Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Marinaro described such angling as "*the ineffable charm of fishing with minutae*" [sic]. Shenk described it more succinctly as "*fishing with next to nothing*". Arnold Gingrich immortalized the challenges and charms of tiny flies in his book *The Well Tempered Angler* (1965) with the "20/20 Club". Membership in the club requires landing a 20 inch or larger trout on a size #20 or smaller fly.

Most anglers punch their ticket to the 20/20 Club fishing midge imitations. Midges hatch all year long, and tying midge patterns can be quick and easy. For example, the Thread Midge Larva is a simple but effective fly developed by fishing guide Gary Willmart for New Mexico's San Juan River. You'll need only a hook, some thread, and good vision to tie it. Don't be misled by the fly's simplicity, for it is an excellent imitation of midge larvae and pupae. Willmart commented about the fly, "*I wish I could make it harder, but this just works the best.*" Drift a Thread Midge Larva just under the surface to trout sipping midges. Willmart's simple but effective fly might just open doors of the 20/20 Club for you as you outsmart oversized trout with undersized flies.

© Rusty Dunn, 2025

### ----- Thread Midge Larva -----

A Thread Midge Larva consists entirely of tying thread. Choose a body color to match naturals of a hatch, which are best sampled from the gullet of a recently caught trout using a small, flexible, plastic eyedropper. Black, tan, olive, and red are common body colors. A Thread Midge Larva in red with a black head works very well in the Driftless.

**Hook:** 2X-short, wide gape, curved shank, fine wire, straight eye, emerger hook, #18 - #26

**Thread:** 8/0 or 12/0, red and black

**Abdomen:** Tying thread, red

**Ribbing:** (Optional) tying thread, black

**Thorax:** Tying thread, black; bulging noticeably



## 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:

|                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| President                           | Steve Musser       |
| Vice President                      | Topf Wells         |
| Secretary                           | Henry Nehls-Lowe   |
| Treasurer                           | Marty Chiaro       |
| State Council Rep.                  | Michael Williamson |
| Board Member                        | Dyan Lesnik        |
| Board Member                        | Jim Beecher        |
| Board Member                        | Riley Bellin       |
| Board Member                        | John Freeborg      |
| Board Member                        | Don Golembiewski   |
| Board Member                        | Joshua Reilly      |
| Past President                      | Mark Maffit        |
| Newscasts Editor                    | Drew Kasel         |
| Conservation Committee Chair        | Jim Hess           |
| Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair | Tina Murray        |
| Youth Education Chair for SWTU      | Tina Murray        |

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