

Newscasts

June/July 2020 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



***Fish-ically distant* – A new way to say “long-distance release” We'll let you know if we are able to schedule any summer events.**

We'll stay fish-ically (physically) distant but socially connected through our website, Facebook page and Instagram. As we move into summer during this unique time, we're looking to share more tips, photos and stories with you ... and also find ways for you to share your own content with our membership. Watch for more news on this front!

And we'll hope to meet again in the Fall ... but please also keep an eye on your email and www.swtu.org for further event updates. Thanks and please be well.

Results of Online Chapter Election

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and cancellation of our April and May 2020 chapter meetings, SWTU conducted the 2020 Board of Directors election online. Our members voted to approve the slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee for the 2020-2021 program year:

President: Jim Hess

Vice President: Topf Wells

Treasurer: Tom Parker

Secretary: Henry Nehls-Lowe

Directors: Dave Fowler, Pat Hasburgh, Ben Lubchansky, Zach Olufs, Curt Riedl, Tom Thrall

State Council Delegate: Michael Williamson

Past President: Amy Klusmeier

That's a great slate of leaders! Thanks to all who voted and all who stepped up to help our Chapter continue making a difference for our environment and one another.

Thank You from Past President Amy Klusmeier

In May our members unanimously approved the slate of candidates nominated for the 2020-2021 SWTU [Board of Directors](#). Thanks to everyone for voting online. Before I congratulate our new members I want to say thank you to outgoing Board Members Rodd Wangren and Mary Ann Doll. Rodd joined the board two years ago and has been a dedicated member; his passion for conservation advocacy will be missed. Mary Ann Doll served on the board for over six years, including two as Vice President. Her commitment to making our chapter events welcoming to all who attended was invaluable. I look forward to working with the current board to continue her efforts to recruit and welcome new members to our organization.

I couldn't be happier that Jim Hess and Henry Nehls-Lowe agreed to come back into board service, and that Zach Olufs agreed to join the board as a new member. Jim will be a fantastic president and I step away knowing the chapter is in very good hands. Thanks to all of you for volunteering your time for these important leadership roles.

I never imagined my term as president would end in such unusual and traumatic circumstances – the Coronavirus pandemic forced us to cancel our spring meetings and work days, and the murder of George Floyd on May 25 inspired peaceful protests and incidences of violence in Madison and around the world. In the [words of Chris Wood](#), TU President and CEO, “We cannot simply ignore the news, go fishing, and wait this out.” It's up to all of us to end [systemic racism in outdoor recreation](#) and our communities, and make SWTU a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization. I look forward to continuing to work with our Board on these efforts.

Racial Injustice and the Conservation Community

The conservation community has joined the discussion of the insidious and pervasive effects of racism in our country. If you have not already read [Chad Brown's powerful article on racism and trout fishing](#), including his own experiences, please do so.

SWTU has plenty of work to do on this score. Our Officers and Board will be thinking hard and creatively about how to better welcome all people of all backgrounds to trout fishing, conservation and SWTU.

In short, we must do more to reach out to people of color of all ages. While SWTU's leadership will be conscientious about this work, we'll need help. If you have suggestions or observations, please contact any Officer or Board Member. Their contact information is always in the newsletter and on the website.

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.

Welcome New Members

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

Max Lamberg	Daniel Miller	Lon Freiberg
Benjamin Nerad	Kyle Freimuth	Steve Kimball
John Barnes	Serra Crawford	Joe Neill
Emelye Bruns	Abbey Fuszard	

We are honored to have you among us. Please join us for a Chapter meeting in the fall, and we will give you a **FREE** raffle ticket, flies and "an offer you can't refuse" from some of our most experienced fisher-folk! Try to get there at 6 p.m. for dinner and to sit with one of our board members to learn more about us. **If you will be attending your first meeting**, please contact [Topf Wells](#) so we can expect you.

Remembering Tom Wendelburg

Tom Wendelburg died sometime in May. None of us know any details because he died in his apartment sometime before his death was discovered.

Tom was one of the most memorable characters in SWTU's history and in the last 50 years of Wisconsin inland trout fishing. He battled demons in his life and finally fought them to at least a draw by the end of his life. He could be challenging to be around.

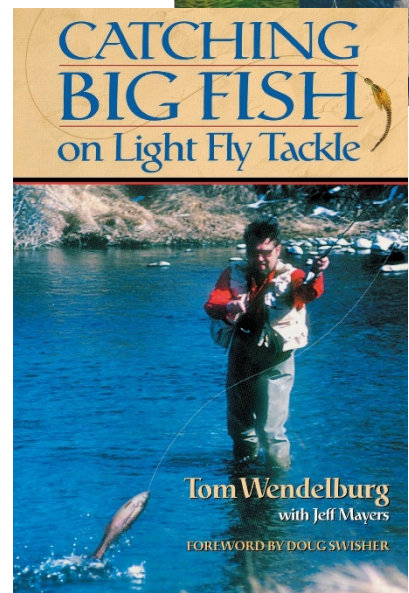
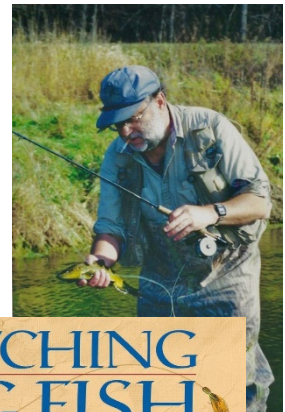
He loved fish and fishing, especially trout. Essentially, Tom dedicated most of his life to fly fishing for trout in Wisconsin, in particular in our area. He could be joyful, exuberant and generous in spirit, especially on the stream. He fished beautifully and was a genuine expert in fly fishing for trout. For some time he wrote fly-fishing articles for some of the leading magazines. Not the normal run of the mill stuff, they did not have a breezy, accessible style. They were dense, packed with information, presented compactly and directly. Jeff Mayer immeasurably helped Tom gather some of this and other material into a book: *Catching Big Fish on Light Fly Tackle*. Well worth the read for someone serious about improving their fishing techniques.

Tom tied unique and extremely effective flies. I've never seen anything quite like his caddis. I don't have many left. When earlier this spring a big brown broke off one of Tom's caddis, I was as sorry to lose the fly as the fish.

Some of the most skilled and experienced anglers in this Chapter will tell you they learned a lot from Tom.

For those of us fortunate enough to know Tom, we hope he has found peace.

Topf Wells





Follow SWTU on Instagram

Events, fish pictures, stream news and even a cool reptile encounter ... [SWTU's Instagram account](#) is a great place for interesting news, facts and photos. Many thanks to Board member Pat Hasburgh for his great work maintaining the account.

New Easement, New Creek

By Topf Wells

Dane County has just introduced legislation to purchase a new easement on Halfway Prairie Creek near Mazomanie in partnership with Groundswell Conservancy

The easement will enable the public to fish about 1,250 feet of Halfway Prairie and enable a restoration to occur in the future. The surrounding land will also lead to more trail development in the Mazomanie/Black Earth area. Halfway Prairie Creek is not currently listed as a trout stream. However, in the early stages of the work on this easement, DNR staff reviewed this area at Dane County's request and noted it has worthwhile potential as trout water. It is also a key tributary to lower Black Earth Creek. The partners in this project have been leaders in the restoration of lower Black Earth Creek including Fred Wolf, the landowner and honored by SWTU for his work on Black Earth Creek, Groundswell Conservancy, and Dane County.

Approval of such easements often takes two-three months and COVID 19 makes that schedule more uncertain. We'll keep you posted as to when the creek is accessible to the public.

SWTU thanks Fred Wolf, Groundswell Conservancy, Sara Rigelman, Sharene Smith and other Dane County staff, and County Executive Joe Parisi and the Dane County Board for their support of this easement and trout stream conservation in Dane County.

Learning More About Some Trout Streams

By Topf Wells

If you need to read a different sort of news these days, your local and hard-working DNR fish biologists might have something of interest. Nate Nye, the biologist for Columbia and Sauk Counties and Dan Oele, biologist for Dane, Green, and Rock have recently released their survey, analysis and recommendations for watersheds and trout streams that should be of interest to SWTU. [You can find them here online](#) or by Googling: WI DNR Wisconsin Fishing Trout Surveys and Assessments

Dan's covers the Sawmill/Erickson watersheds in Green County; Nate's Bear Creek in Sauk County. Both are based on a full summer of stream surveys, the collection of other data and historical information, and hours of analysis. They cover two watersheds at different points in their trout stream management.

Sawmill and Erickson creeks don't yet have many DNR or other public easements and not much restoration. They are two of the watersheds where SWTU, the DNR, and Pecatonica Pride have interested landowners in the health of their streams and working with the DNR. Dan's report documents the potential both streams have with some stretches having good trout numbers.

Bear has miles of easements and restoration, thanks to the work of many partners, including the DNR and the Aldo Leopold Chapter. It has become a popular fishing destination. Nate's report shows how effective that work has been and details some of the problems and potential improvements the creek and its tributaries have. Both are well worth your time if you want to know more about any of these streams and their possible futures.

How often do you fish Columbia County?

In addition to the great information linked in the article, spend some time with an extensive report from Nate Nye covering the [trout streams of southern and central Columbia County](#).

You'll find fabulous, detailed information on streams convenient to anyone in Madison or points north.

The reports also give you a sense of how comprehensively and thoroughly our fish biologists study our streams and how detailed and thoughtful their recommendations are. Dan is working on a similar study of the Black Earth Creek watershed and Nate is completing another report on the trout streams of Columbia County.

DNR Purchasing Land Along Anthony Branch

At its June 24th meeting, the DNR Board will consider buying an additional 44 acres along Anthony Branch in the Anthony Branch Fish and Wildlife Area. The purchase would include .3 mile (about 1600 feet) of double stream frontage. The area is on the west end of the property, near the stream's headwaters, and off USH 14, just south of Oregon. SWT President Jim Hess, with the Board's approval, sent a letter to the DNR Board supporting this purchase.

Anthony Branch is a most interesting stream. It has very cold water and wild brown trout. The surrounding land is really interesting with some great stands of oaks, a large sedge meadow, and lands that the DNR is trying to restore to natural vegetation. Some of the stream runs through reed canary dominated lowland and is not easily fished as the season progresses. Access is difficult to the headwater area off 14 and I'm not sure how often, if ever, it's fished.

Much of the 44 acres is farmed and will eventually be converted to native vegetation. The purchase is good because of the additional protection it will afford the creek, improved public access over time, and expansion of an area that offers good hunting, birding, and walking. It also marks the first DNR purchase of additional lands and frontage on a Dane County trout stream in years. While the DNR has pursued easements, which are great, a purchase often offers better access, more restoration options, and most recreational activities. I hope this marks a change in DNR practice with regard to land acquisitions in our area.

Thanks go to Dan Oele, our fish biologist, and especially to Julie Widholm, the Dane County Wildlife biologist, who led this effort.

That's three great stories about streams!

Learn more about local stream restoration and protection by [watching this video](#) by Sara Rigelman, Park Property Planner, Dane County Parks. Watch to the end and you will see that this episode is dedicated to the memory of Dan Wisniewski.

Fountains of Youth

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

by Rusty Dunn

Seine a stream, and the insects you capture will not look anything like the glamour photos of a fly fishing magazine. Instead of flawless specimens, you'll see a rag-tag collection of fluff and rubble that barely resembles the insect world. "Stillborns", "cripples", "failed emergers", "stuck-in-the-shuck" ... call them what you like, but insects of the drift are disheveled knots of legs, wings, and body parts splayed every which way. What flies imitate this untidy mess? Untidy flies, of course. Soft hackles are perfect for the task. If you've not discovered the pleasures of fishing soft-hackled flies, it's about time you did.

Wingless wet flies originated in the English north and Scottish border country. Their deceptively simple designs and sparse dressings reflect the austere and frugal anglers who invented them. Be not deceived by their simplicity, though, because soft hackles are very effective as emergers fished in or near the surface, as nymphs drifted deeply, or as adults, pupae, or nymphs swung through a riffle. Such flies have been around since fur and feather were first lashed to hooks, and some of the oldest patterns are still some of the best.

Scotsman W.C. Stewart (1832-1872) designed three of the most effective soft-hackled flies of all time. His Black, Red, and Dun Spiders, so named because they resemble a spider in appearance, not because they imitate one, are described in Stewart's 1857 book *The Practical Angler*. Stewart fished all three spiders simultaneously on a single leader ("a cast of three"). His logic was that one of the three would be effective no matter what was hatching. Stewart made his living catching trout to be sold at the local market, so the logic proved to be well-founded.

Stewart is perhaps best known as the author who persuaded anglers to cast upstream. Stewart advocated upstream presentations at a time when most presenta-

tions were made downstream on a wet fly swing. Instead of a long line fished downstream, Stewart fished a short line upstream. The benefits seem obvious today, but not so in 1857. Dry flies had only recently been developed and were not widely used. Downstream angling was simply "the way it was done". Stewart was not the first to recommend upstream presentations, but he was the first to convincingly describe why it is better. Stewart cited four reasons: (i) An angler remains unseen by trout; (ii) upstream casts improve hooking ability and (iii) avoid disturbing unfished water; and (iv) an angler can better imitate the behavior of natural insects. Stewart was articulate and persuasive. His case was so convincing that nobody even disputed his conclusions (a rarity in the angling literature!). Fly fishers simply adopted the new method, and, to this day, most casts are made upstream.

Like many north country anglers, Stewart believed that exact insect imitation is not needed for success. Prevailing fly dressing elsewhere in Britain stressed the importance of precise imitation, but Stewart disagreed. Instead, he emphasized overall size, form, and sparseness of artificial flies:

"The great point, then, in fly-dressing is to make the artificial fly resemble the natural insect in shape, and the great characteristic of all river insects is extreme lightness and neatness of form. We wish to impress very strongly ... the necessity of avoiding bulky flies."

Stewart believed that the single most important thing for success was imitation of a natural insect's behavior:

"The nearer the motions of the artificial flies resemble those of the natural ones under similar circumstances, the greater will be the prospects of success."

Stewart had it right, and you would do well to adopt his approach. Stewart's spiders are not found in the fly bins of your local shop, but if you can tie a knot, you can tie his flies. And, you'll be fishing with a piece of fly fishing history.
© Rusty Dunn, 2020

----- Stewart's Black Spider -----

Stewart's Black, Red, and Dun Spiders share the same basic design. The Red Spider is tied of a reddish brown landrail feather (substitute with quail or grouse) and yellow thread. The Dun Spider is tied of an ash-colored dotterel feather (substitute with starling underwing) and thread whose color Stewart failed to specify. Tied in small sizes, Stewart's Spiders are excellent when midges are on the wing.

Hook: Wet Fly, #12 - #22

Body: Brown silk thread over the front 1/3 to 1/2 of the hook shank

Hackle: A starling body feather, palmered over the thread base; fiber length equal to shank length; reinforce the feather stem with thread



Stay Connected



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



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:

President	Jim Hess	jimhess5599@gmail.com
Vice President	Topf Wells	topfwells@gmail.com
Secretary	Henry Nehls-Lowe	henry.nehlslowe@gmail.com
Treasurer	Tom Parker	tparker23@charter.net
State Council Rep.	Michael Williamson	mlwilliamson.53@gmail.com
Board Member	Pat Hasburgh	patrick.hasburgh@gmail.com
Board Member	Curt Reidl	curt_riedl@oxfordcorp.com
Board Member	Tom Thrall	tthrall2@yahoo.com
Board Member	Dave Fowler	dfowler82@gmail.com
Board Member	Zach Olufs	pgofishing@gmail.com
Board Member	Ben Lubchansky	608csk@gmail.com
Past President	Amy Klusmeier	amy.klusmeier@gmail.com
Newscasts Editor	Drew Kasel	madkasel@gmail.com
Conservation Committee Chair	Jim Hess	jimhess5599@gmail.com
Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair	Tina Murray	swtu.women.diversity@gmail.com
Youth Education Chair for SWTU	Tina Murray	swtu.women.diversity@gmail.com

Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited

P.O. Box 45555
Madison, WI 53744-5555