

# Newscasts

December 2020 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Virtual meetings and fly tying classes We're working on recordings and live virtual events

Please watch your email for links and news to virtual events that are in the works and we hope to share soon.



**Presentations** – These will include some great information that will help you to find and fool Driftless Area trout.

- Up first, Nate Nye, DNR fish biologist for Columbia and Sauk Counties, will offer presentations on Bear Creek and some Columbia County trout streams.
- Sara Rigelman and Theresa Nelson of Dane County will then share a behind-the-scenes look at the Badger Mill Creek restoration that just started. This work will cover almost a mile of the stream in Verona along the Ice Age Trail. SWTU has supported it with a \$5,000 contribution.

**Fly tying** – Chapter fly tying instructors are exploring a virtual beginner's fly tying class that would start mid- to late-January and run 6 weeks. Many details must be ironed out, so stay tuned! In the meantime, you can check out the [archive of Rusty Dunn columns](#) and some [great fly tying videos](#).

**Raise a virtual hand** – If you have any burning questions about the local watersheds, ecology initiatives or other outreach, please send them along to Topf Wells at [topfwells@gmail.com](mailto:topfwells@gmail.com) and we'll do our best to see they are addressed in an upcoming presentation.

Watch your email and we'll "see" you soon! You can also keep connected through our website, Facebook page and Instagram.

## Kittleson Creek Visit with Generous Donor

Chapter president, Jim Hess, recently met with Dr. Terry Guerink for a tour of the restoration work on Kittleson Creek upstream of the bridge on Drammen Valley Road. Thanks to Dr. Guerink providing one of the most generous donations in our Chapter's history, the DNR was able to complete far more work than was originally budgeted. The tour gave us an opportunity to say thanks and show Dr. Guerink the progress being made.

The tour was led by Dan Oele, DNR Fisheries Biologist, and the project supervisor, Scott Harpold, DNR Trout Habitat Coordinator. One interesting feature of the project is how the crew incorporated the removed trees into in-stream habitat and streambank stabilization. Rather than creating burn piles, they installed root wads and used the tree trunks to redirect stream flow. The picture at right shows some of the root wads and a submerged log in gin clear water. There will be a lot of large trout in this easement, but do be prepared to lose some files. As they say, nature is not neat.

The two-track earth mover used for this project was quite impressive. The cab and bed can rotate 180 degrees so the operator does not have to turn around to dump the dirt being removed. This is critical when working in tight spaces.



The tour was educational and quite fun. It was agreed that Dan Oele would schedule a time for Dr. Guerink to watch a stream shocking operation in spring.

It should be noted this restoration is on land owned by Larry and Barb Lange. Our chapter recognized them with the Landowner Certification of Appreciations Award at a recent banquet.

## 2021 – The Year Without an Icebreaker

You've probably already guessed that we will *not* all be gathering indoors for our Icebreaker event – our largest annual gathering and fundraiser. The Board is talking about some manner of outdoor event once the weather is better and we know a bit more about the pandemic.

## Tremendous News from our Friends with Alaska TU!

Hi TU friends and family,

I am so excited to share this news with you and feeling especially grateful going into Thanksgiving!

Today, the Army Corps of Engineers [announced their decision](#) to reject the Clean Water Act permit for the Pebble Mine. While there is more work ahead to defend the decision and to work toward long-term protections...this is the news we've been working toward for the past year (plus)! Please join me in celebrating this BIG news - we absolutely couldn't have done it without you and your chapter and we are so grateful for your steadfast support for so many years!!

More soon – and happy thanksgiving!

Meghan Barker  
Bristol Bay Organizer – Trout Unlimited



## 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.



### A Gift for the Future

Many thanks all who have responded to our November 30 email asking you to consider a year-end donation to our endowment fund. If you can't find the email, it's [posted here on swtu.org](#).

## Click. Order. Give. With Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. [Set "Trout Unlimited" with the Madison location as your charity](#) and you will be giving to the SWTU with every purchase. It adds up over time, and **the Chapter has already received \$433 through this program!**



## Welcome New Members

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

Jim Berke	Matt Anderson	Matt Conner	Eric Berg
Kim Mackey	John Kesler	Michael Larson	Dan Blake
Jonathan Schroerlucke	Brandon Nguyen	Jacob Lescher	Bruce Greer
Mike Capp	Lou Reed	Tim Simonson	Mason Williams
Josh Wescott	Darren Snyder	Mitch Gann	Thomas Grist
Keith Warnke	Arnie Wenn	Thomas Baker	Jim Doak
John Riley	Dennis Mack	Theodore Miess	Ashley Gries
Thomas Schweiger	Noah Humfeld	Vern Jesse	Greg Danko
Rebecca Hudson	Sawyer Easton	Kousei Perales	Jerry Osborn
Ross Kolodziej	Matt Moran	Steve Schasker	

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 this month made it harder to sort ... but it's better to be inclusive and we're happy to have your continued support!)

## Fight the Virus ... Read a Book!

By Rusty Dunn

2020 ... what a year. Cancellations, closures, abandoned plans, and broken dreams. A year of seemingly endless sadness, as family, friends, and strangers near and far succumbed to the relentless virus. We now enter a long winter of high anxiety and low expectations. How should we pass the time? You've already exhausted the Netflix library. You've already organized the sock drawer umpteen times. What to do next? The murmur of flowing water calms a troubled spirit, and the next best thing to being there is reading about it. Recommendations of selected fly fishing books follow below. The list is by no means exhaustive or balanced, but the books contain insight and wisdom from some truly great authors. They will lift your spirits, make you laugh, improve your fly fishing or, at the very least, help pass the time until winter's icy grip abates and the pesky virus yields to human ingenuity. You've probably already read some of the books and heard about others, but some little known and underappreciated gems are included as well. The books are among my personal favorites for cold winter evenings. Digital copies of those originally published before 1926 are available online for free at [www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org), [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org), or [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com). Enjoy!

### Books to lift your spirits

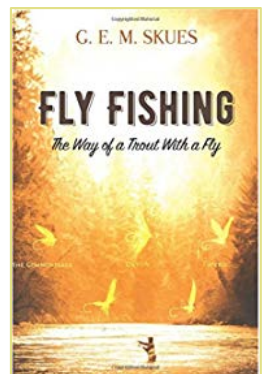
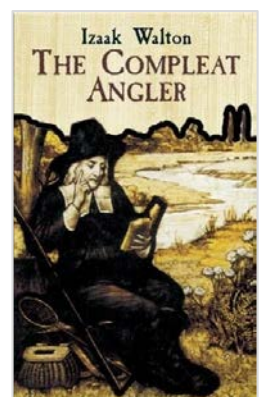
*The Compleat Angler* by Isaak Walton and Charles Cotton  
*Salmonia* by Humphrey Davy  
*Thy Rod and Thy Creel* by Odell Shepard  
*The Earth Is Enough, Growing Up in a World of Trout and Old Men* by Harry Middleton  
*A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean

### Books to entertain you

*Rod and Line* by Arthur Ransome  
*Ransome on Fishing* by Arthur Ransome  
*The Longest Silence* by Thomas McGuane (or almost *any* book by Thomas McGuane!)  
*Spring Creek* by Nick Lyons  
*Notes from an Old Fly Book* by Gordon Wickstrom  
*A Summer on the Test* by John Waller Hills  
*Fishless Days, Angling Nights* by Sparse Grey Hackle  
*The Last Pool and Upstream and Down* by Howard Walden

### Books to improve your fly fishing

*The Way of a Trout With a Fly* by G.E.M. Skues  
*Fishing the Dry Fly As a Living Insect* by Leonard Wright  
*The Art of the Wet Fly* by Roger Fogg  
*Gentleman Preferred Dry Flies* by William C. Black  
*Tying Small Flies* by Ed Engle  
*Wet Flies* by Dave Hughes  
*How to Fish from Top to Bottom* by Sid Gordon  
*The Fly and the Fish* by John Atherton



## Fountains of Youth

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

by Rusty Dunn

Hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of unique fly patterns have been designed over the centuries, but the vast majority of them are like icebergs in an ocean. They draw great attention when born but, after drifting around for a while, their significance declines, and they eventually disappear. A fortunate few reappear later with fashionable new names, but most are never heard from again. Only the best flies persist in our fly boxes for decades, and only the best of the best last for centuries. Such flies have survived the most rigorous test of all: the test of public opinion. In a world driven by survival of the fittest, they are Darwin's timeless champions. Space in your fly box is precious habitat, and it is where great trout flies live. Trout, of course, are the ultimate judges of fly effectiveness, and those that remain popular for centuries have survived for good reason. You would be wise to give them some stream time, for they will be catching trout long after you have shuffled off this mortal coil.

'Palmer'-style flies have been largely unchanged for over 350 years. Their defining feature is a widely-spaced spiral of hackle wrapped along the entire length of a hook shank. Most Palmers are wet flies, and angling authors through the centuries uniformly praise their trout-catching abilities. Few of these authors, however, agree on what Palmers imitate. Some suggest caterpillars or woolly bears. Others propose baitfish or insect nymphs tumbling in the drift. G.E.M. Skues credited their prowess to the "buzz" of hackle, whose movement gives an impression of struggling insects. Whether Palmers imitate insects, baitfish, or are simply optical illusions matters little, because the opinions of those who matter most – the trout – are unanimous: Palmer flies are a good tasty meal.

The term "palmer" originated in the 1300s, but how the word came to be associated with fly fishing is uncertain.

English pilgrims to the Holy Lands were known as "palmer" in the Middle Ages, because they traditionally returned home with a palm branch or leaf to mark their pilgrimage. Evangelical pilgrims wandered about Europe preaching the gospel, and "palmer" grew to be synonymous with an itinerant lifestyle, not only of Christian pilgrims but also of creatures great and small. Caterpillars, for example, were called 'palmer-worms' by the 1500s. One theory for the origin of 'Palmer flies' is that they were tied to imitate palmer-worms. Palm trees are absent from the cold climates of northern Europe, but Christian clergy at the time used branches of local trees in lieu of palm fronds for religious ceremonies. Pussy willow was a favorite, and a second theory for the origin of 'Palmer flies' is that they look like the hairy, furry catkins of pussy willow branches.

Although the linguistic origin of Palmer flies is uncertain, the timing is not. Thomas Barker described the first Palmer fly in *The Art of Angling* (1651). Barker's book is historic, for it is the first to give explicit instructions on how to tie an artificial fly. Earlier books contained lists of the ingredients for artificial flies, but none described the appearance of finished flies or gave instructions on how to tie them. Barker's 'Winged Palmer Flie' was the very first fly in the very first book to have an instructional narrative. Palmer-style flies continue today in the form of Woolly Worms, Woolly Buggers, English Bumbles, Bivisibles, and many others. The term 'palmer' is today used more often as a verb to describe the act of wrapping hackle spirally along the length of a hook shank.

Barker described five Palmer flies in *The Art of Angling*. The great entomologist Alfred Ronalds described them as '*a good fat bait*', one that is "*never totally out of season*". Materials have evolved, and the names have changed, but the basic profile of a Palmer fly remains true to Barker's original. Try one on your next pilgrimage in search of trout. Once you experience Palmer magic, you might become an itinerant trout-fishing evangelical yourself.

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### ----- Red Palmer -----

Barker described both Red and Black Palmers. His Black Palmer has a black body, silver tinsel, and black hackle.

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- Hook:** Heavy, long-shank, wet-fly hook, #8 - #14
  - Weight:** An underbody of wire (optional)
  - Thread:** 8/0 or 6/0, color to match the body
  - Body:** Blood-red wool or dubbing, long in fiber
  - Rib:** Flat gold tinsel
  - Hackle:** Natural red hen hackle or schlappen (tail feathers of a rooster). Strip the hackle barbs from one side of the stem before wrapping.
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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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