

Newscasts

September 2021 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



No in-person meeting in September Temporary pause due to COVID surge and Delta variant



With the uptick in COVID cases caused by the Delta variant and including increasing numbers of breakthrough cases, the SWTU Board has **postponed the September meeting**. We hope to resume meetings in October and will again ask that you only attend if vaccinated and not feeling any symptoms. It was a tough decision based on the current state of the pandemic. Please stay tuned.

And a reminder ... when we do start meeting it will be at [Schwoegler's Lanes, 444 Grand Canyon Dr., Madison, WI 53719](#). If you know of somebody who said they're planning to attend in September, please reach out and make sure they don't show up at Schwoegler's on the 14th.

Fall stream workday schedule

By Jim Hess

While indoor in-person meetings are still being figured out, we will build on the tremendous success of our spring workdays with a fabulous fall schedule. Being outside significantly reduces any risks, and we may ask that people have their shots and/or wear masks. Here are the dates and locations as they stand right now. Of course, there is always a possibility of changes and more detailed information will follow.

September 18 – Davidson Property on the Sugar River, just south of Verona on Hwy 69 at 1855 Hwy 69. Turn right (west) on Oak Grove Rd and go about 600 feet to the end of the road, you will see an old stone building on the right. Cut honeysuckles and other invasive woodies and use the waste materials to build brush bundles in the river.

October 9 – Joint workday with the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter on the Smith Conley Creek at 2800 Cty Rd H, south of Barneveld – clearing box elders and invasive woodies on a new easement. This is a beautiful stretch of Smith Conley, connecting to several easements upstream.

October 23 – Sawmill Creek, Severson Easement (another new DNR easement) at N8490 Hay Hollow Road, Blanchardville – clearing box elders, invasive woodies, and two large trees that have fallen into the stream. I am reaching out to the Blackhawk Chapter and Pecatonica Pride to see if they want to join us.

November 6 – Badger Mill Creek, at the Old PB Park and Ride – mainly clearing large box elders and some honeysuckles along Badger Mill Creek. We are coordinating this project with Lars Higdon, Dane Co Land and Water Resources Department, in their efforts to create a native area along this section of the stream.

December 4 – Back up date.

Never attended before? The work is easy and not at all complicated ... can you carry a stick and put it on a pile of other sticks? It's really about that simple, and there is work for anyone of any skill level or ability. Plus, you'll meet some great people and probably learn of a new place or two to drift a fly through.

If you have questions, contact [Jim Hess](#), Workday Chair.



“Go anyway”

Bill Flader shares lessons learned from 75 years of fishing

My parents, both fishers, often told us, "If you've made plans to go fishing and the forecast is unfavorable, go anyway. It often turns out better than you expect."

Years later, the evening before my fishing buddy Tom and I were to depart for the Florida Keys for flyrod tarpon, we got a phone call from our guide-to-be advising that he had been injured and would not be available. Hoping for the best, we went anyway. (Arriving at Bud 'n Mary's Marina in Islamorada in high season without a guide is not recommended.)

On arrival, we were told, "Well, we have this older guy who still takes people out." What choice did we have? That "older guy" turned out to be Jimmie Albright, then in his early 70s, one of the pioneers in saltwater fly fishing and the developer of the knot that bears his name. He was the preferred guide of baseball great Ted Williams, and was also requested by Ernest Hemmingway, Jimmy Stewart, and Zane Grey.

Due to Jimmie's age we spent much of the day "staked out" in likely spots, and I don't recall jumping any tarpon. However, we were intrigued by his stories and experiences, and felt privileged to be included among his usual clientele.

The next day we were assigned to a less experienced guide, but when Tom strip-struck a tarpon the line-leader knot broke. I'd never heard Tom swear before. Back at the dock, Jimmie was busy cleaning his boat nearby, so Tom asked him if he would tie a better knot. Of course he was happy to oblige.



Sign up for the TU DARE Bus Tour

Annual Fall Tour of Restored Trout Stream Projects

On October 12th Trout Unlimited – Driftless Area Restoration Effort and Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited are hosting the Annual Fall Tour of restored trout streams in Dane and Green County. The tour will start at 9:30 am from the parking lot of the Hyatt Place Madison/Verona (846 Liberty Drive, Verona, WI) and return to the parking lot at/around 3:30 pm. Four stops are planned for the tour. Badger Mill Creek will be the first stop and is an urban trout stream project in Verona. Sara Rigelman, Park Property Planner with Dane County Parks will be on hand to lead discussion of this site, as well as and the second stop on the Sugar River. The Sugar River site includes a wetland restoration and Mike Engel, Private Lands Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be on-hand to talk about the wetland.



We'll have lunch (pizza from the Sugar River Pizza Company) at New Glarus Woods State Park before heading west to Hefty Creek where Dan Oele, Fisheries Biologist with the Wisconsin DNR has an active restoration project going on. The tour will conclude on the Kittleson Creek Project where root wads are the main instream habitat practice.

We have a limited number of spaces on the chartered bus, so advanced registration is advised. The cost for transportation and lunch is \$10 and can be paid in advance by check or paid the day of the event. Checks can be made out to Trout Unlimited and sent to Jeff Hastings, E7740 Hastings Lane, Westby, WI 54667. You can also contact Jeff for questions at Jeff.Hastings@tu.org, or (608) 606-4158.

(Note that this is the same date as our October meeting, but the two will not overlap.)

Terrific news in BECWA newsletter

Groundswell/Dane County purchased a 10-acre streambank and trail easement on Halfway Prairie Creek for streambank restoration and extension of the Wolf Run Trail that connects Mazomanie to Wisconsin Heights School. Learn more at:

<https://groundswellwisconsin.org/page.asp?page=BECstreamprotection>

BECWA is the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association, and you can learn a lot from their newsletter and website (www.becwa.org). This is an important partner organization for all who care about the cold water resource in Dane County. It's a membership organization that is very much worth joining.

Ave Atque Vale* to Bradd Sims and Sara Rigelman

By Topf Wells

As Bradd and Sara leave for wonderful and richly deserved new jobs, they have earned the traditional Roman farewell to a great hero or heroine. They have been resolute champions of many of our most cherished trout streams and great friends and allies of SWTU. Bradd has left the position of DNR Fish Biologist for Lafayette and Grant Counties and the lower Wisconsin River to become the DNR's Trout Coordinator with added responsibilities for rivers. Sara is joining the DNR in the State Parks and Trails Program; among her many duties for Dane County were the trout stream easement and restoration program. When you fish the many new easements and restorations in the Blue River watershed or enjoy the thriving brook trout of the Steiner Branch, you can thank Bradd. Sara was the key figure in acquiring and restoring over 20 miles of trout streams, many in the Sugar River watershed. They always answered any request for help or information from SWTU and were great partners in some productive projects. We wish them the best.

** hail and farewell : I salute you, and goodbye*

Halfway Prairie Creek walkalong

By Topf Wells

Walked it and the recent restoration work by Dane County. It's easily accessible from the downstream end of the Wolf Run restoration in Mazomanie. It encompasses a bit of Black Earth Creek (BEC) downstream of the pedestrian bridge and several hundred yards of Halfway Prairie Creek (HPC). It does not include the confluence because HPC and BEC are on different properties at that point. Railroad ownership of part of the creek corridor is also a complication.

The setting of the restoration is unique in my experience. All the brush and some larger trees have been cleared but many tall, straight, mature cottonwoods and black walnuts remain. The disturbed grounds have been heavily seeded with grass. Those features combine for a park-like setting. The creek will have some shade but the trees are so tall and straight that casting will be easy.

The work seems to consist of bank shaping, restrained rip rap, some instream rock work and many small root wads/digging logs/brush bundles. The stream bottom seems to be mostly sand, rock and gravel, and should provide easy wading. Entering and exiting the stream should also be safe and easy. The instream devices will eat nymphs and streamers but the stream is relatively shallow and dries and wets might work the best anyway. The quality of the work seems excellent.

The stream should offer pleasant, small stream fishing. The habitat is there, so with cool enough water temps trout should be happy and in fishable numbers.



Badger Mill Creek restoration – Creating more urban fishing opportunities

Construction for the County's stream restoration project on Badger Mill Creek in Verona started in early August. The stream restoration project is being done in conjunction with the City of Verona's [East Side Interceptor Gravity Sewer Project](#), which has largely been completed. Verona started first and its restoration, best seen upstream of the Bruce St. bridge, is now complete. The County's stretch, further upstream, has now started. The lower stretch looks good with lots of rock work. Thanks to Curt Riedl, of the SWTU Board, for his leadership on this project and the City of Verona. Dane County reports the work is progressing well on its property.

Topf Wells provides a first look at the project

I walked and fished the City of Verona project on Badger Mill Creek, upstream of the Bruce St. bridge. The work encompasses several hundred feet of stream, where extensive sewer excavations had neared the eastern stream bank. Led by Curt Riedl, SWTU strongly supported this project with a donation of \$4,000. Most of the work consists of bank shaping and extensive rock work to stabilize the stream bank and create trout habitat. The rocks were those uncovered in the sewer work and have found a productive new use. The project is complete and has improved some very nice runs. Even I caught a nice trout there.

The fishing is not at its easiest right now because the stream, like so many others this time of year, has thick and large weed beds. The work will provide pleasant, convenient, and productive trout fishing for years to come. Sincerest thanks to Curt and the City of Verona.

Welcome New Members

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

Dale Marsden	Greg Danko	Matt Anderson
Paul Lackner	Patrick Trafton	David Dowell
Henry Anderson	Paul Lanz	Michael Polelle
Tony Campbell	Jackson Korger	Frank Lazar
Wade Anunson		

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

Fountains of Youth

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

by Rusty Dunn

It's a hot breezy day in mid-August. A grasshopper slips from a grassy bank and falls with a *plop* to the stream below. A sinkhole in the water quickly opens beneath the hopper, and it disappears amid a deep, guttural, sucking sound. You smile, knowing full well what that slurp really means. It means the frustrating days of hatch matching, tiny flies, and fussy fish have passed. It's now time to shed the vest/pack and return to basics. Time for a single fly box tucked in the shirt pocket. Time for uncomplicated fishing and impulsive trout. Yes, the time for terrestrials has finally arrived.

When hatches of mayflies and caddisflies decline in early summer, terrestrial insects sustain trout for months. Ants, beetles, grasshoppers, moths, crickets, leafhoppers and more fall or are blown into streams, where trout lie in wait. Ants and beetles are a trout's bread and butter during summer and fall, but grasshoppers are the meat and potatoes. Large flies, stout tippets, explosive strikes, and big fish are the order of the day when hopper fishing.

Grasshoppers belong to the taxonomic order Orthoptera, which also includes crickets and locusts. Fly anglers usually associate hoppers with the American West, but hopper imitations date to the very beginnings of fly angling in England. Thomas Barker described the first hopper imitation in his 1651 book *Barker's Delight: The Art of Angling*. Isaak Walton referenced Barker's fly in his 1653 classic *The Compleat Angler* and wrote passionately about the effectiveness of grasshoppers as both live bait and imitative flies. Charles Cotton added two hopper patterns to the fifth edition of *The Compleat Angler* (1676), which he co-authored with Walton. Hopper flies, however, have never been very popular in Britain, possibly because the cool climate limits their abundance. North America, on the other hand, nurtures huge numbers of grasshoppers and

locusts, especially in arid western states. Visit a fly shop in the West, and you'll discover that the variety of modern hopper imitations is similarly huge. Why so many patterns? Because they all work! Offer thumb-sized hunks of foam and fiber to trout at times when meals are scarce, and the results are predictable: most all of the patterns work well.

The Madam X is a first-rate hopper imitation and general attractor that originated in Montana's Bitterroot Valley. Doug Swisher of Hamilton, MT designed and popularized the fly, but its origins likely also involve John Foust, a Bitterroot native, fishing guide, fly shop owner, and renowned fly tyer. Foust's Ugly Rudamus fly is quite similar to Swisher's Madam X, and both flies originated in the early 1980s in the same little Montana town. Coincidence? Perhaps, but it seems likely that Foust contributed to the madam's design by serving as her inspiration. The Madam X incorporates two time-tested features of first-rate dry flies: (i) a body and wing of hollow deer hair tied "Trude style" for floatation and visibility, and (ii) a bullet head of deer-hair tied "reverse style" for a prominent head and deeply segmented body. The Madam X was one of the first dry flies to incorporate long, wiggly, rubber legs.

The Madam X is remarkably versatile. It floats like a cork and is highly visible to both trout and angler. It is an excellent searching pattern for exploring unfamiliar waters. The wing of deer hair imitates not only grasshoppers, but also stoneflies, moths, locusts, cicadas, caddisflies, and other insects. Fish a Madam X close to grassy banks, overhanging trees or bushes, and undercut banks or woody debris. A windy day will snarl your casts, but it will also increase your success. Deliver the fly with a pronounced *splat*, allow it to dead drift briefly, and then give the fly a little twitch. Rises by smaller fish can be explosive, but those of big fish are usually very deliberate. Don't lose your cool when that hole in the water opens beneath your fly. Wait a moment or two, then set the hook on what might be the largest trout of your angling year.

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----- Madam X -----

Doug Swisher's original pattern is tied only of bundled deer hair, but most Madam Xs today incorporate floss, dubbing, or yarn wrapped over the hair to match the colors of naturals. Wisconsin hoppers are various shades of green, yellow, or tan. An all-black Madam X is an excellent cricket imitation.

Hook: Light wire, 2X- or 3X-long, #12 - #6

Thread: Size and color to match local hoppers

Body & Tail: A bundle of natural deer or elk hair lashed to the hook shank

Wing & Head: Deer or elk hair tied tips forward over the eye and pulled back to form both the wing and a bullet head

Legs: Round rubber



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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