

Newscasts

October 2021 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Chapter meetings paused until spring Tough decision as COVID-19 threat continues

After deep discussion, the SWTU Board of Directors made the difficult choice to pause the monthly chapter meetings until spring 2022, at least. It's not fair to our members, the leaders who plan the meetings, our speakers or our venue to continuously prepare to meet ... only to cancel as COVID-19 and its variants continue to affect so many.

While the lengthy, indoor meetings are on a long pause, here are two key items that may give you hope:

1. We have **many stream workdays planned through December**. These are outdoor activities and a person can stay as distanced from others as desired. They do a tremendous amount of good for our cold water resource and also raise the spirits of all who attend. No matter your age, experience or physical ability, there's a role for you at a workday.
2. We're in the early stages of **planning a large, outdoor event for the spring** to bring us all safely together to laugh, learn and raise funds to support our mission.

Below you'll find articles that go into deeper depth on these exciting activities.

Stream Workdays – one cancelation, but many planned

The Saturday, October 9, workday is CANCELED due to the ground being too wet. We'll shift that work to the spring, but for now please plan to attend one of the other events planned for this fall. Please plan to attend one or all of the other upcoming workdays.

September 18 – Davidson Property on the Sugar River, just south of Verona on Hwy 69 at 1855 Hwy 69. There is no road sign or fire number, it is the first road past Riverside Rd. 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 – Smith Conley Creek at 2800 Cty Rd H, south of Barneveld. This will be a joint workday with the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter – clearing box elders and invasive woodies on a new easement. This is a beautiful stretch of Smith Conley, connecting to several easements upstream. Details to follow.

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. This will be another joint workday with the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter and I am reaching out to the Blackhawk Chapter and Pecatonica Pride to see if they want to join us. There will be a cookout at the end of the workday.

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 stream section. Details to follow.

December 4 – Williams-Barneveld Creek, within the 103-acre Shea Prairie unit in the Mounds View Grassland Preserve owned and managed by The Prairie Enthusiasts. Williams-Barneveld Creek is a tributary to the East Branch Pecatonica. Access is from Mounds View Rd. We will be meeting at the parking lot at 3095 Mounds View Rd, Barneveld. We will be clearing lots of willows to help create a native prairie grassland. There are a lot of trout in this small stream – you will want to check it out. Details to follow.

Note: It is respectfully requested that anyone who is not vaccinated against COVID-19, please do not attend our workdays. We recognize the pandemic is causing stress and uncertainty and that people have widely differing opinions about the vaccine. We also know that we have a responsibility to provide as safe a workday event as we can. Thank you.

Spring event will be a first for us and we could use your help

January's Icebreaker fundraising event is again cancelled

The Icebreaker will not occur this year. Despite repeated requests, we have not received any information about the availability of the American Family Center. That uncertainty alone at this date makes planning the event impractical. With the ongoing pandemic, we don't expect any large venue to grant us the space we'd need at very low or no cost.



This cancellation means SWTU will again miss its key source of revenue and the opportunity for members and trout anglers from across the region to gather for a day of friendship, fun and learning.

The Board is discussing whether we can offer an outdoor event in April (or more probably May) with many of the Icebreaker's best features: fun, prizes, camaraderie, instruction, tasty food and revenue for the chapter. Ben Lubchansky, our Icebreaker Chair, has graciously provided some preliminary plans for such an event.

However, we can only undertake this initiative if we have plenty of volunteers to assist Ben and the Board in planning and executing the event. It's all new and from scratch – fresh ideas and perspectives will be greatly valued.

The time to start planning it is **now**, at least for purposes of setting a date and scouting outdoor locations while they aren't covered in snow and ice. With enough helpers, it won't be much work for any one volunteer, and this could be a great activity to stay active and make new friends over the winter.

If you are interested in being part of an ad hoc committee to plan this event, please contact Ben Lubchansky at 608csk@gmail.com. Meetings will be conducted via Zoom except when gathering outside to look at venues. And of course, please reach out if you have any ideas or connections that could help create the great gathering we all want ... and need!

Workday report: The Dirty Dozen Meet Tarzan

By Topf Wells

Jim Hess is the best thing since beer. He organized another great workday and the Sugar River is looking the better for it.

Jim spent hours of effort making this one happen. He first chose the worksite with Sara Rigelman and then mowed a trail into the site for his UTV and all our participants.

About a dozen folks showed up and they did amazing work in cutting, hauling and installing. I was slowed by back troubles and did not show up until 10:30. My jaw dropped by how big a brush bundle was already in place! Amazing also is how quickly the brush bundles start to work. The creek was a tad bit on the muddy side, and you could immediately see the currents start to eddy along the edges. All the honeysuckle and buckthorn leaves and branches were collecting the sediment.

Huge thanks to all, with apologies to those I miss. Bob Brewer and Kalthleen Falk were in the stream shoving branches in, weaving them, tying, etc. Ted Swenson again led several folks from the Nohr Chapter to help us out; we'll delight in returning this favor someday. The Lawtons of Madison, Tagatz Creek and the Wolf River made their first appearance at a work day and showed the skills they had developed on their streams. The Lawtons are the

son and daughter-in-law of John Lawton, a great Wisconsin conservationist wonderfully depicted in Bill Stokes' "Trout Friends." (Please buy and read this book. You might consider fishing Tagatz. Thousands of wild brook trout and millions of wild mosquitos. The former make the latter bearable, most of the time.)

Bob Harrison demonstrated he is equally adept at wrestling large box elders as large smallmouth.

Tom Krauskopf, Zach Oluf, and I just want to remind you: Take back troubles seriously. DO WHATEVER YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST TELLS YOU. Really, don't skip a day.

In addition to helping the stream out, Jim and the team have created a nice angler's trail and access point. Todd pointed out that the stream looked great downstream of the new brush bundle.

Tarzan?? We put in so much brush that we ran out of hemp rope to tie everything in. Our enterprising groups remembered the movies of their youth began pulling down grapevines and using those. Cheetah, Jane and Boy would have been proud and maybe helped.

By the way, many in the group walked by this spring's brush bundle and it looked great (see the photos below from Jim Hess). I also stopped by to look at our first-ever bundle on the Tom Sarbacker easement just north of Paoli. It's disappeared because it's turned into a full-fledged stream bank. Amazing.

Jim and all, thanks and fabulous work.

Workday photos – Courtesy Jim Beecher

Many thanks to Jim for capturing the action! Please also [see the full photo album](#).





Brush Bundles Work – by Jim Hess

I had a chance to inspect the bundle we installed on 6.19.20, which was an extension of the brush bundle we installed on 6.15.19. The picture on the left shows what one looks like after 3 months and the other shows what one looks like after 2 years, 3 months. You have to look closely, you can easily see the brush from 6.19.20, which appears to dead end into an existing stream bank. That existing stream bank is the brush bundle from 2019 with dirt, grasses, and plants growing – extending the eroded stream bank out.



Let your guide know ...

Bill Flader shares lessons learned from 75 years of fishing

Let your guide know of any specific desires or expectations you have.

Many readers of this newsletter will have experienced the excellent smallmouth bass fishery among the sunken logs of Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior, and most will have been guided by Roger LaPenter out of Ashland.

In my case it became an annual event around Memorial Day. I always enjoyed good fly fishing, but....in Roger's truck on the way to the launch site one year I was moved to say "Roger, I've been fishing with you for about 8 years and I haven't caught a 20 incher. I'd like to catch one of those today." Lo and behold, by day's end we had caught four that size. Was that luck or....?

Years later, after one of Bob Clouser's talks at a fundraiser at the American Family training center, I hopped onto the platform to chat with him, and shared my experience with Roger, knowing that he and Lefty (Kreh) had been scheduled the day after one of my visits to Ashland. In response he turned his head to the side, with his hand shielding his mouth, and said quietly, "He knew where they were."

Season Over: Time for Trout Reading

By Topf Wells

Two of our excellent DNR trout biologists have furnished material you'll enjoy and learn from.

Dan Oele, biologist for Dane, Green, and Rock Counties, has released his survey, assessment, and recommendations for Black Earth Creek and its key tributaries. The sobering news is that the creek's trout fishery has significantly declined. It's a good trout stream but brown trout numbers are down in many sections. Dan has plans to address some of the key issues. I hope and expect SWTU will be a great partner with Dan to improve one of our key home waters.

A bit further afield, Justin Haglund, biologist for Iowa and Richland Counties, published the same sort of material for the designated trout water on Mill Creek and the tributaries on upper and middle Mill Creek. In general, Justin documents some great trout water. Included in his plans are major restorations on segments of the stream that really need such work and the elimination of the Catch and Release section.

Both documents are based on many hours in the field and hours more analyzing all that data. I just hope at least the key proposals in both are implemented.

They are easy to find. Google "WI DNR trout surveys" and then scroll to Dane and Richland Counties.

Welcome New Members

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

Tim Olmsted	Joe Steffen
Brian Busler	Harley Smith
Robert Abrahamian	Richard Burnham

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

On a cloudy cool day in April, you arrive onstream to find blue-winged olives in the air and on the water. Fish rise steadily below each riffle. Jackpot! You tie on a size #16 BWO dry fly and stealthily approach the first pool. You cast to a riser, and a nice trout ascends from the depths, approaches your fly, but turns away at the last moment and descends into the pool. Another cast, same result. You've just suffered a fly angler's classic indignity. The trout refused your perfect presentation. A proverbial slap in the face. Not to worry. You've read all about the situation and know exactly what to do: switch to a smaller version of the same fly. You remove the size #16 and tie on a #18. A few more casts, and another nice trout rises from the depths. Another look, another slap in the face. You're thinking, "These BWOs must be smaller than I thought". You clip off the size #18 and tie on a #20. More refusals. In desperation, you try a size #22. Not even a look. You switch to a different BWO dry and repeat the progression. You catch a few trout but, despite all the fly swapping, feel that you missed out on a bonanza. The hatch wanes, and you walk away thinking, "What did I do wrong?"

You were probably mere inches away from success! Hatching mayfly nymphs ascend from the stream bottom and accumulate just under the surface, where they transition to aerial adults. The process of transition is quite lengthy, and trout feed heavily on the intermediate stages. We collectively call these stages "emergers", a term that was first used in the literature in two influential 1971 books (*Selective Trout* by Swisher & Richards and *Hatches* by Caucci & Nastasi). The concept of insects physically transitioning at the surface from nymphs to adults, however, is ancient. William Blacker accurately described the process in 1842 (*Blacker's Art of Fly Making*), and his Winged Larva is arguably the very first fly that unambiguously imitates what we today would call an emerger. Hundreds of authors since Blacker have emphasized the importance of emergers and designed thousands of flies to imitate stages of an emergence.

Trout feeding on emergers – even those under the surface – usually produce a visible disturbance (a "rise") on the surface. As described by the legendary F.M. Halford in *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice* (1889),

"The apparent rises are bulges, and instead of sucking in the duns when hatched, the fish are busily engaged in chasing and securing the Ephemerae in the nymph state, before they have emerged from the shuck".

Experienced anglers recognize bulging rises vs. surface rises and act accordingly with their imitations.

Mayfly emergence is an untidy process involving sustained quivering motions as the winged adult struggles to escape its shuck, pierce the surface film, and extend its wings, legs, etc. Generations of talented anglers have struggled to imitate emergers. George Marryat, a famous contemporary of Halford, described the frustration of fly choice when trout are bulging: *"You can imitate the nymph, but you cannot imitate the wiggle"*.

Au Contraire! Wet-fly practitioners dating to the earliest of times showed the way. Wingless wets, winged wets, fuzzy nymphs, and ragged flies tied of soft water absorbent materials imitate nymphs and emergers quite well. Their soft flowing fibers of fur and feather quiver with every little puff of current. The key is to fish such flies just under the surface, where they imitate struggling emergers. Soft feathery flies also imitate failed hatches, in which drowned naturals drift near the surface as disheveled tangles of body parts.

Englishman G.E.M. Skues was a master of nymphing near the surface with soft-hackled flies. He popularized the methods worldwide, and his book *The Way of a Trout With a Fly* (1921) is a landmark in the history of fly angling. This year marks its 100th anniversary. The book describes trout behavior, and it remains fresh and relevant today a century later. Skues' Medium Olive Nymph is an excellent emerger imitation during a BWO hatch. Fish it trailed behind an indicator dry (e.g., parachute BWO) and allow the nymph to sink an inch or two below the surface. Be ready for that bulging rise, only this time you will know what to expect and likely be hooked up on a beautiful trout. © Rusty Dunn, 2021

----- Medium Olive Nymph -----

Skues greatly enjoyed olive hatches, and his writings describe well over a dozen different imitations keyed for use in differing months. This Medium Olive Nymph pattern for the early season was published in *Side-Lines, Side-Lights & Reflections* (1932).

Hook: Wet fly, #15 or #16

Thread: Pearsall's Gossamer silk, primrose

Hackle: Dark blue dun hen

Tail: Two strands of dark dun hen hackle

Abdomen: Stripped brownish peacock quill taken from near the eye

Thorax: A small wad of dark hare's ear



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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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