

Newscasts

December 2021 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



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

**January's Icebreaker fundraising event is again cancelled
Regular in-person Chapter meetings are on hold until spring**

The Icebreaker will not occur this year due to venue availability and the ongoing pandemic. 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 608csc@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!

SWTU Workday: December 4, 2021 – Williams-Barneveld Creek 3095 Mounds View Rd., Barneveld

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.

Time: 9am to 12 noon (Chapter Approved Sawyers please arrive at 8:30).

Where: Williams-Barneveld Creek, 3095 Mounds View Rd, Barneveld. For people coming from Madison, go west on US 151 to Mounds View Rd, which intersects US 151 five miles west of Mt Horeb. For those of you coming from the west, it is 2 miles east of Barneveld. Take Mounds View Rd south for 3.3 miles to a small parking lot on the east side of the road. There is a tricky turn in the road at Prairie Grove Rd. If you have a navigator, enter 3095 Mounds View Rd, Barneveld. Here is a Google Map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/GjS7MwjpJfSn7ug98>

Parking: The parking lot is small, so plan to park along the east side of the road. It is always safer to park on the same side where we will be working.

What: This will be joint workday with The Prairie Enthusiasts Empire-Sauk Chapter and the Harry and Laura Nohr TU Chapter. We will be working in a 103-acre prairie unit, called Shea Prairie, within the Mounds View Grassland Preserve owned and managed by The Prairie Enthusiasts. Rich Henderson, land steward and Vice Chair of the Empire-Sauk Chapter will be leading this workday.

We will be clearing non-native invasive willows and some box elders along the stream corridor. There will be some chainsaw work, but mostly using loppers to cut and treat smaller willows. It is critical that we treat every willow we cut. The willows should be cut at 2" above the ground. **Bring waders or hip boots** as we will be working on both sides of the stream. Otherwise, there is a pedestrian bridge.

Bring: Bring work gloves, sturdy shoes, and eye and ear protection. Also **bring reusable water bottles** that can be filled from our 5-gal water jug. Stay hydrated. Masks are not required.

This will be our last workday for the year

Thanks to everyone who participated in our spring and fall workdays, helping to make 2021 one of our more successful years. So far, 126 volunteers have participated in our workdays – clearing invasive woodies, planting trees, clearing streams to make them more accessible, and providing a healthier habitat for the fishery and environment.

– Jim Hess, SWTU Conservation Chair, SWTU President

The Williams-Barneveld Branch is a great little trout stream in an extraordinary setting – almost 600 acres owned and managed by The Prairie Enthusiasts. For 25 years, TPE has preserved remnant prairies and savannas at this site while recreating prairies and wetlands. Most of the section of stream we'll work on was dramatically improved via a comprehensive floodplain restoration. Much of the topsoil that had washed into the stream corridor was removed; you'll be seeing a Driftless Area stream that probably looks and functions as much as possible like a trout stream before European farming practices triggered the erosion of topsoil into the valleys. **Rich will offer a tour of the entire property after the workday** and tell us about some exciting prospects for this and neighboring lands. The entire parcel is open to fishing, hunting, birding and hiking.

Register now: Fly Tying Courses – 2022

Trout Unlimited invites you to learn fly tying or improve your tying skills this winter. Experienced SWTU instructors will teach both beginning and intermediate level fly tying courses in Fitchburg beginning January 19, 2022. Classes consist of instructor-led demonstrations and hands-on tutorials. The courses are completely free of charge, and all materials needed in class are provided. You need only supply thread and fly tying tools, a list of which is available at <https://www.swtu.org/learn/flytying/flytying-classes/>.



Beginning Fly Tying is intended for those with limited previous fly tying experience, including complete beginners. General techniques needed as a foundation for fly tying are established, and basic but effective trout fly patterns are demonstrated and practiced. An instructional booklet with pattern sheets is provided free of charge.

Intermediate Fly Tying is intended for those who have a solid foundation of fly tying experience and want to increase their proficiency. The course builds on the foundations of Beginning Fly Tying and progresses to more advanced methods. Techniques and materials are more varied, the patterns can be more complex, and the hook sizes are generally smaller than flies of the beginning course.

In-person instruction planned, but ...

SWTU currently plans to offer both Beginning and Intermediate Fly Tying classes in person on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Fitchburg Community Center (5510 Lacy Rd., Fitchburg) beginning January 19, 2022. Courses run for eight consecutive Wednesdays (final class March 9, 2022). Please note that if the infection rate of COVID-19 in Dane County worsens over the next few weeks, in-person instruction will be replaced by virtual instruction via Zoom. A decision of whether to teach the courses in person will be made by instructors approximately mid-December, and all registered students will be notified by email. **Instructors are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, and they request that students be vaccinated as well.**

Advanced registration is required! Register online via at Fitchburg Recreation Department (<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/599/Recreation>). If you've not previously created a password-protected customer account with Fitchburg Recreation, you must do so before registering.

Questions? See <https://www.swtu.org/learn/flytying/flytying-classes/> for additional information. Or, email questions to swtu-flytying@outlook.com.

Workday recap: Beavers have nothing on SWTU

By Topf Wells

On November 6, SWTU completed another productive and safe workday and saw a massive stream restoration in the process.

We cleared small to large box elders from the upper end of the County's restoration of Badger Mill Creek near the Park and Ride lot and the Ice Age Trail on the east (north? northeast?) end of Verona. The aim is to assist the County in creating a much healthier creek corridor with native grasses and flowers instead of the box elders. And maybe some oaks or hardwoods more desirable than the BEs?

We had a great turnout. We needed excellent sawyers and some of our best showed up. We had 12-15 haulers and a wonderfully skilled skid steer operator. Such a machine saves time and backs. Many thanks to Mike Krause for bringing and running the skid steer.

The mix of boxelders included some half dead and/or with twisted trunks. Jim was rightly concerned about safety and spent several hours clearly marking trees that should be cut. This preparation provided much needed and clear direction to everyone on the project. The sawing and hauling were the best spaced and safest I've seen on a SWTU workday.

We felled and hauled well over a dozen trees and more reclamation work should be much easier. The County's stream work features excavation and log/brush sills. They narrow the creek substantially. It will be interesting to watch the scouring that should take place. Trout habitat has improved by a factor of 5, 10, 20 – you name it.

The project is nearly complete but may take another two weeks or so.

We had a diverse turnout. Two neighbors of and long time advocates for the creek and surrounding lands joined us as did two young men who said they were interested in community service. We had a nice mix of old and new SWTU faces. Kim Licitar has now traveled from Johnson Creek to attend several work days. He receives the Chinook Salmon Award for Most Miles Traveled for Workdays. Bob Harrison wins the Golden Beaver Award for safely taking down the gnarliest of the box elders.

Every workday has unique challenges. This, I think, could have been potentially dangerous. We owe Jim special thanks for all the steps he took to limit those hazards as much as possible. We all left as a happy, tired, productive and safe crew.

Workday photos – Courtesy Jim Beecher

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





Do you, Like, Facebook? Help tell our story! Fun volunteer opportunity

Our [SWTU Facebook page](#) is one important way we share successes, create engagement, promote events and attract new members. An ad hoc group of our leaders have kept it going, and we are now looking for a volunteer to manage the page more directly and actively. If you are savvy in the ways of social media and would like to help, please email president@swtu.org. It's not much work or time. Other volunteers help provide pictures, details, etc. to spin into posts.

Keep your fly in the water

Bill Flader shares lessons learned from 75 years of fishing

Keep your fly in the water, if for no other reason than that's where the fish are, and you may be missing opportunities, as the following examples show.

Many readers will have fished for trout or salmon in Lake Michigan tributaries, or even western rivers. I've had hookups just by leaving line out while wading cross-current moving from place to place.

Then there's 73 year old John H, part of our party at Christmas Island for bone fishing, who (probably having been there before) trolled a tarpon fly (usually no longer than 4 inches) behind the slow-moving punt used to transport fishermen between wadable flats. He was rewarded by landing a 6 foot, 85 pound barracuda, an all-tackle world record.



And on a unique trip, six of us spent a week fishing for bonefish from a 90 foot "mothership" yacht anchored on the remote south end of Andros Island in the Bahamas. It was a cold spring in that area, and the occasional bones we saw were in large groups, usually followed by sharks or cudas ... not happy fish. Later in the week our guide reported seeing two large bones, so four of us were dropped off to wade in that direction, to be picked up later. Soon clouds rolled in, making spotting fish impossible, so there we stood. After a while it occurred to me there could be fish swimming nearby and not even know it, so I starting casting, very quickly hooking an above average torpedo, which when landed we estimated at 6-7 pounds, likely the biggest of the week.

You never know.

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!

Paul Fuhremann	Jeffrey Kaehny	Adam Schroeder
Pos Chandrasiri	Tim Sweeney	Ernest Schultz
Darrell Thorstad	Nicholas Molnar	Dan Hogan
Craig Andler	Stanley Nichols	Scott Canon
Phil Hinderaker	Jim Diestelmann	Ed Freer
Brandon Vallina	Kyle Jones	Anthony Messinger
Daniel Juday		

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

Have you ever thought about the technology that connects you to a running trout? Your rod is a marvel of engineering. It is a hollow tube of graphite composites embedded in epoxy and precisely tapered. It is as light as a feather and stronger than steel. Your fly line floats on miracle plastics infused with micro-bubbles and coated with a secret sauce more slippery than black ice. Your leader blends nylon and other synthetics into a copolymer filament stronger than Spiderman's web. The complete outfit is a wonder of petrochemical engineering. But what about the fly you tie to the business end of the leader? How much petrochemistry does it contain? If you are an extreme purist or an avowed geezer, your flies are likely tied only of fur and feather – just the way Isaak Walton intended. But if you learned to fly fish in the last 30 or 40 years, your flies probably contain a good dose of synthetic materials. Indeed, many flies today owe more to the influence of DuPont Chemical than Isaak Walton.

Nylon is a mainstay of fly fishing and fly tying. It was invented by DuPont as a stronger and more durable substitute for natural silk. Nylon was introduced commercially in 1938, and the ensuing 20-30 years was a period of great discovery in synthetic chemistry. Polymer chemists at DuPont and elsewhere developed miracle synthetics such as nylon, neoprene, polypropylene, epoxy, polyester, Mylar, silicone, and many others. Where would we be without synthetics? Your Chernobyl Ant would be nothing but a hook and thread ... *silk* thread!

Fly tying traditions evolve slowly, and synthetic materials were uncommon in flies until in the late 1970s. John Betts, a remarkably clever and creative angler from Boulder, CO, was instrumental in popularizing synthetics in fly tying. He realized that the textures, colors, and appearance of synthetics are not found in the natural

world. Synthetics add sparkle, float well, are easy to handle when tying, and are often less variable than natural materials. As Betts said, "*With synthetics, you don't have to worry if the rabbit slept on his left or right side.*" Betts wrote of the unique properties of synthetics in magazine articles and in his influential 1980 book *Synthetic Flies*.

Betts' innovative contributions to fly tying earned him the nickname "Mr. Synthetics". He prowled fabric, bridal, lingerie, and craft shops in search of new materials. He discovered synthetic organza, a stiff sparkly nylon that makes excellent spinner wings. He introduced fine polypropylene as a buoyant dubbing and winging material. He invented creative uses for poly yarn, including poly wings and drawn melted tips of extended mayfly bodies. He introduced the tapered nylon fibers of White Sable artist's brushes for dry fly tailing and named the material "microfibetts". Betts is perhaps best known for his introduction in 1985 of "Z-lon", a sparkly but supple form of nylon. Z-lon is finer than Antron (rug yarn), more supple, does not mat when wet, and makes excellent tails, bodies, and wings.

Z-lon is perhaps best known as a tailing material in emerger patterns, where it imitates the trailing shuck (nymphal skin) attached to and trailing behind an emerging adult. Craig Mathews' and John Juracek's Sparkle Dun is an elegantly simple and remarkably effective mayfly emerger whose popularity and success stems from its Z-lon tail. The pattern originated in the 1980s and is similar both to Fran Betters' Haystack of the 1950s and to Caucci & Nastasi's Comparaduns of the 1970s. Only the tails differ on these three patterns, with Sparkle Duns having tails of Z-lon to imitate a trailing shuck. The Sparkle Dun's low-floating design and glistening translucent tail make it an excellent imitation of mayfly emergers and newly hatched duns. Add a little petrochemistry to your favorite emerger and you will discover the genius of John Betts ... "better fishing through chemistry".

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----- Sparkle Dun -----

The sizes and colors of Sparkle Duns can be varied to match emerging duns of any mayfly you encounter.

Hook: Dry fly, #10 - #24

Thread: 6/0, 8/0, or 12/0 to match the hook size; color to match the natural

Tail: Z-lon or other nylon fibers, brown, light brown, ginger, or olive-brown to match natural; tied sparsely; length from one-half to a full shank length

Body: Natural or synthetic dry fly dubbing to match natural

Wings: Natural deer hair, posted upright and spread laterally to a full semicircle.



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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