

Newscasts

June 2023 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Two Great Reasons to Meet in June – President-elect and Fly Swap! Our Tuesday, June 13, Chapter Meeting

By Topf Wells

We need to elect a new President. The Board thought we needed to do this in person to enable our new President to meet as many members as possible as President-elect (he's a frequent meeting attender so has, of course, met many of us through the years).

Our nominee is **Steve Musser**, a long time SWTU member who has served the Chapter on the Finance Committee and with fundraising.

As any or our excellent previous Presidents can tell you this position is demanding and rewarding. We're grateful to have someone with Steve's commitment and experience willing to take this responsibility on. The Board pledges to work with Steve to help him lead and bolster our Chapter. Please help Steve and SWTU off to a good start by attending the June meeting.

That meeting will be Tuesday, June 13th at Schwoegler's Bowling on Grand Canyon Dr. on Madison's west side. Dinner and drinks will start at 5:30 and the election will occur about 7. We are also planning a brief review of the Chapter's financial status and a report on the last year's activities and achievements.

For a little fun, we'll have a fly or lure exchange. Pick out a couple of flies and lures that have been fun to fish this year and exchange them with a fellow member. You'll receive two of that person's favorites. Should be a cool way to meet a fellow members and receive some new fish catchers.

Schwoegler's Lanes, 444 Grand Canyon Dr., Madison, WI 53719

President-elect Steve Musser

Following the election at the May meeting and another pitch for someone to step up to the President role, frequent attendee Steve Musser approached outgoing President Mark Maffit to inquire about it and possibly throw his hat in the ring. Further conversations cemented this as a good fit for Steve and for SWTU.

You can get to know Steve better at our June meeting and then we'll hold a vote.

Members at our May 9 meeting voted in favor of the proposed slate:

Vice President: **Topf Wells**

Treasurer: **Marty Chiaro**

Secretary: **Henry Nehls-Lowe**

State Council Delegate: **Michael Williamson**

Director positions:

- **Jim Beecher**
- **Dyan Lesnik**
- **Don Golembiewski**

Trout Days Celebration 2023—Zander Park in Cross Plains

The annual Cross Plains Lions Club “Trout Days” celebration along Black Earth Creek in Zander Park was a real team event. The Black Earth Creek Watershed Association (BECWA), Capitol Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC), Groundswell Conservancy, and your very own SWTU made May 6 a memorable day for the scores of attendees.

The “Bugs on the Creek” demo was again conducted by Bobbi Peckarsky (BECWA), along with Mike Miller (WDNR)—along with a couple of his friends—Laurie and Ethan—were a great help!! Mike Rupiper (CARPC) discussed the Green Infrastructure project with visitors to the exhibit; while Tony Abate (Groundswell) met with attendees to go over their land protection program.

BECWA board members Deb Weitzel, Mary Devitt, and Barb Borns were on hand to discuss the how of BECWA facilitates integrated management of watershed activities and provides valuable information on watershed issues and concerns.

SWTU members conducted a fly casting class, went over needed equipment (what to bring besides your rod, reel, line, flies and license), and a lesson on “reading and fishing the water.”

The event was so much fun – and even better, it provided a great opportunity to network and talk about managing and protecting this precious resource.

Thanks to the following TU participants (hope we didn’t leave anyone out):

Jim Hess	Mark Maffitt	Don Golembiewski	
Henry Haugley	Jim Beecher	Tom Thrall	
Paul Williams	Henry Nehls-Lowe	Dave Fowler	Topf Wells

Our thanks go to the Village of Cross Plains and the Cross Plains Lions for making this event possible.

Photos provided by Jim Beecher. [See more in the story on swtu.org](https://www.swtu.org).



Badger Mill Creek: It Ain't Over Til It's Over

By Topf Wells

The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission voted on Thursday, May 25th, to stop discharging water to Badger Mill Creek. MMSD did so despite the unanimous opposition of local governments, residents and conservation organizations, including SWTU. You can access [MMSD's website](#) for their side of the story. In short, the Commissioners believed their staff's analysis that stopping the water would not significantly harm the creek and that the District's offer of \$1 million for projects on the creek would improve the creek.

The advocates for the creek believe the massive loss of water will hurt the creek, that MMSD ignored or misrepresented DNR concerns over the harm to the fishery, and that the \$1 million offer does not represent any serious planning as to whether or how such damage could be mitigated.

The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission will now conduct a full, public, transparent and expert review of MMSD's recommendation. The DNR then receives that CARPC report and decides to approve or not MMSD's recommendation. We believe the CARPC process will be rigorous and advocates for the creek intend to participate fully in it.

We'll provide more details for the chance for public input into the future of Badger Mill Creek in the belief that this time the public's views will receive a fair and full hearing.

Workday report: 1

Good Days for Great People

By Topf Wells / Photos by Jim Hess

Justin Haglund, Lloyd Meng, and Jared Myers had tree planting all set on the DNR property on Trout Creek below the dry dam. Holes were dug, 60 oak trees distributed, fences, staples and mats in place. Justin and team were there on Saturday in a UTV ready to help. The Nohr Chapter had organized the day and put out the call to their members and SWTU to plant those trees. However, it was UW Graduation Day, Mother's Day Weekend, and the nicest fishing Saturday of an uneven season. Who'd show up?

Some great folks from Nohr and SWTU did but saving the day were 6 or 7 students from UW Hoofers, the UW Madison outdoor outing club. They arrived, by the way, the day after their finals ended. They doubled our workforce and quadrupled our productivity. They seemed to enjoy the day. As I walked by a conservation biology major, she was saying to her friend, "I love days like these." The future is in good hands.

All the trees were perfectly planted in two hours and any generation gap was bridged with thanks, brownies, pork sticks, cheese curds, and more thanks.

Justin and crew's planning and execution were spot on and the soil was easy to work. Mild temps and no bugs, unless you count everyone's favorite arthropod, the tick. The property is a fallow pasture with some native plants. The trees will help the aesthetics of the land and should be great for the stream.

One advantage of days like this is the tips you pick up for the stream and property. I now think the best access for fishing the stream is the trail accessible downstream of the bridge. A bit longer but much easier walk.

We'll learn more about this stream in the next year or two. Justin and his crew will survey and assess the Trout/Mill Creek watershed with a full report probably coming out in the next year.



This was not the only good day to have occurred lately. I hope Dyan can provide some more details but the short version is that the Vets on the Fly had their fishing outing on the Sugar at Basco this Wednesday afternoon. They encountered a huge caddis hatch that had lots of trout up and feeding and eager to be caught. Including an 18 incher.

Sometimes the red gods smile on those who deserve some outdoor joy.

Thanks to Ted Swenson, Carol Murphy, and Brian Larson of Nohr who organized the day and Jim Hess who enabled SWTU to participate. Dyan provided more evidence of why we're lucky to have her on the Board. Justin and crew worked incredibly hard and well to make this an enjoyable and productive day. And Badgers, thanks and way to go!

Now the oaks just have to grow.

Workday report: 2

The Hot End of a Cool Season of Workdays

By Topf Wells

The weather, chainsaws, and brats were hot on Saturday morning at SWTU's last workday of the spring season on the Rudd easement on Hefty Creek. Thankfully (and way to go, Marci Hess) the watermelon was cold.

Before the 20 or so volunteers got to the shade, brats, watermelon, and homemade rhubarb cake (another "way to go" to Dyan Lesnik), we had to install brush bundles in the creek to complement the DNR's restoration. The DNR had not been able to operate their heavy equipment in this part of the easement.

We had new SWTU sawyers and one veteran had the biggest new chainsaw I've seen in a while. I'm wondering if he's planning to cut redwoods on his vacation. Those folks and equipment were great. Guiding our efforts and working prodigiously himself was Vince Schmitz of the DNR Operations Crew that restored the stream. Vince's knowledge, labor, patience, and good humor were vital to this successful day.

We had a good mix of sawyers, haulers, and in-stream installers. We used brush from previous workdays and made further use of the box elder and willow on site. We also used the new anchoring system we learned from the DNR at Smith Conley. We finished one brush bundle and got pretty darn close to a second. We'll finish the work this fall when, I devoutly pray, it will not be 90 degrees.

No way around it, it was hot. We paced ourselves, drank lots of Jim's mercifully cold well water, and made it to lunch.

Thank goodness because it was a fabulous lunch provided by the Rudds, Louis, their very handsome and mouse-eliminating cat, and Peaches, their adorable if muddy yellow Lab. Featured were April Prussia's Italian brats, available at Mt. Horeb's Farmer's Market and well worth the trip.

This workday was held in honor of Dave Sanders. Dave held many positions in SWTU including President and Chair of the Icebreaker, for many years our major fundraiser. His work was fundamental to the Chapter's success for many years. As important were the warmth and kindness with which he greeted and treated all of us whenever we saw him. He died when COVID had disrupted our activities and communications. We needed to celebrate his contributions to SWTU. Thanks to many past and current Presidents and Board Members who attended this day in his honor.

Other thanks go to Jim Kanvik, who wrestles the equipment trailer to each workday. Jim Beecher's photographs provide a fun history of these days.

Most of all in all the thanks to this all star cast, huge gratitude and appreciation to Jim Hess, who organizes these days as our Conservation Committee Chair. He keeps these days varied, fun, productive and safe. That takes more work than we know.

Thanks, Jim. And please take some time off and catch some fish. We'll be waiting for the return of workdays in the fall. The late fall, when it's cool and crisp.

Workday photos courtesy Jim Beecher. [See more in the story on swtu.org.](http://www.swtu.org)



Many Thanks to Our Spring Fair Donors!! You Helped Raise \$15,000+

Acme Organics
Ann Miller, entomologist
Bad Dog Frida
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One Barrel Brewing
Pizza Brutta
Planet Bike
Play Lark
Restoration Cider
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Rutabaga Paddlesports
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Starkweather Brewing

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Vortex Optics
West Fork Sports Club
White Bridge Coffee
Working Draft Brewery



Drawing for winners



Casting for prizes

Another Great Year for Project Green Teen (PGT)

By Brian Counselman, Shabazz High School

PGT students had a great week in the driftless area. Students pictured did biotic indexing and fish shocking with Mike Miller from UW Madison. They also did restoration work at the Westfork Sportsman's Club picking rock in preparation of native restoration in washed out flood plains in addition to building a wing dam. And of course they spent plenty of time on the stream fishing with SWTU guides. It was another great year for PGT!



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. (Note that you may need to click the "Last Modified" header at the top to sort the list with the latest minutes at the top.)

Welcome New Members

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

Steven Schroeder	Janis Eells
Bill Roznik	Peter Flood
Julie McLaren	Paul Johnson
Larry Statz	Lee-Jay Strifler
Daniel Grasser	Patricia Beghin
Grant Bauermeister	Steve Antholt
Christopher Kregel	Lee Pafford
Richard Chatlosh	Karen Culbertson
Charles Lehner	William Wineke
Troy Brazell	Gary Harbort
Bill Rowe	Thomas Tjugum

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

Summer approaches, and the sweet of the year is fading fast. The abundant hatches of spring, when fishing is easy and everyone is an expert, will soon fade. Before you know it, the dog days of summer will be at hand. If you're like most fly anglers, you've suffered your share of indignities so far this season. Insults from those picky fish of March, who refused your finest BWO imitations. Were they too big or the wrong shade of olive? Maybe the trout were feeding on midges? Who knows! Or those snobby trout of April, who slashed at everything *except* your beautifully tied caddis imitations. Or those single-minded fish of late May and early June, who keyed on some indecipherable feature of emerging sulfurs and thumbed their noses at your entire fly box. Summer, however, is a time for some angler payback. Hatches have waned both for you and for the trout. The trout can no longer afford to be choosy. It's time to tease and torture the little bastards. Time to drive 'em crazy. Time to show 'em who's boss. Yes, it's time for Edward Hewitt's Neversink Skater, one of the most unlikely flies you will ever see.

Edward Hewitt (1866-1957) developed his Neversink Skater in 1937 for the sultry days of summer on New York's Neversink River. The fly is the essence of simplicity, tied only of thread and hackle. The hackle, however, is outrageously long. Hewitt conceived of the fly while watching large trout leap for fluttering butterflies in broad daylight. Skaters float high and delicately, perched on the tips of their oversized hackle. When skipped, skated, and danced over trout, skaters often provoke violent and repeated attacks. They are unorthodox attractors – flies for those bright sunny days when the surface is barren and the fish are lethargic. It's a fly with an uncanny ability to raise fish from the deep at a time when normal dry fly fishing is futile. Many distinguished authors, including Vince Marinaro, Charlie Fox, Charles Brooks, John Atherton, and Ernie Schwiebert sang its praises. They all described the

magic of Hewitt's Neversink Skater and its ability to take untouchable fish on bright sunny days. As Vince Marinaro said,

"The only safe rule I can offer is that the fisherman should carry a few at all times and try them when everything else fails - or try them before everything else fails."

"Variants", "Spiders", and "Skaters" are related dry fly designs that all utilize overly large hackle. They are high floating flies that ride lightly on the surface. First intentional use of oversized hackle to float a dry fly is attributed to Dr. William Baigent in 1875. His 'Baigent's Brown' would be considered a Variant in today's jargon, although he didn't use the term. Variants have long tails, optional wings, and a collar of hackle that is about one size larger than normal proportions. Spiders go one step further. They are similar to Variants, but have no wing and sport a collar of even longer hackle. (The term "Spider" also refers to soft-hackled wet flies originating in the north of England, but they are very different beasts.) Variants and Spiders are classic English patterns, but Hewitt's Neversink Skater is uniquely American. It takes the concept of oversized hackle to the extreme. Skaters have no body, tail, or wings – only wraps of enormously long hackle. They are hackled puffballs and, like the proverbial thistle down, land gently and float softly. They "tip-toe" on the surface guided by the slightest tug of leader or puff of wind.

Try fishing Skaters during those slack periods when nothing is hatching. Treat the fly and leader with floatant, cast up-and-across or down-and-across, and skate it over likely holding water. The fly should twitch and bounce irregularly and lightly. Keep it high, dry, and moving at all times. Be prepared for explosive rises but set the hook slowly. A skater's hackle shields the hook point, and its hooking ability is rather poor. The thrill of moving large fish in clear water on sunny afternoons, however, makes up for poor hook sets. The added satisfaction of taunting those previously super selective trout into submission under tough conditions should be reward enough, especially following those indignities of spring. ©Rusty Dunn, 2023

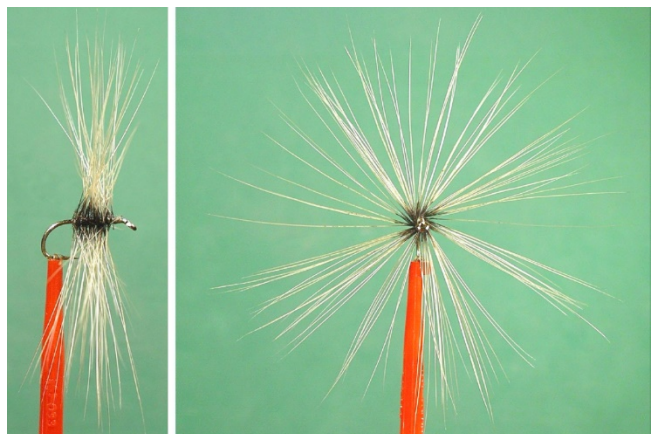
----- Neversink Skater -----

Wrap two hackle feathers at mid-shank with the dull sides facing each other. Popular hackle colors are honey, ginger, badger, furnace, black, and brown/grizzly mixed. Finding suitably long hackle is difficult, and it should be cherished. Coq de Leon rooster saddles have some excellent hackle for variants, spiders, and skaters.

Hook: Dry fly, short shank, #14 or #16

Thread: 8/0, color to match hackle

Hackle: Long stiff dry fly hackle, finished fly diameter ~2 inches or more.



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

Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

President	Mark Maffitt
Vice President	Topf Wells
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Board Member	Jim Beecher
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