

Newscasts

September 2023 Serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



A Very Special Award and Guest Our Tuesday, September 12, Chapter Meeting

The summer Newscasts teased some big news to share at our September meeting. We can share now that **the DNR is honoring SWTU with its External Partner Award.**

The external partner award recognizes an external team, agency, organization or business who has partnered with the DNR advancing the agency mission exemplifying cooperation and beyond compliance effort to achieve a successful project. Five awards will be awarded each year to an external partner who best exemplifies cooperation and beyond compliance efforts to achieve a successful project.



Todd Kalish, Bureau of Fisheries Management Deputy Director, will present the award. Todd will then further honor us with a presentation covering general fisheries updates, including:

- Major statewide and regional initiatives we are currently pursuing
- Select Fisheries initiatives in SW Wisconsin
- Fisheries staffing and new hires

Todd started here in Wisconsin, traveled widely and now we're lucky to have him back. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Field Biology from the UW-Platteville and a Master of Science degree in Aquatic Science from UW-La Crosse. Highlights of Todd's career include working on the Boardman River watershed restoration project; being a member of the DNR Fisheries Division Management Teams for Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin; and working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to enhance natural resources for the wise use and benefits of local, regional, and statewide communities.

We hope you can join us to help celebrate our Chapter's great accomplishments. The meeting will be Tuesday, September 12, at Schwoegler's Bowling on Grand Canyon Dr. on Madison's west side. Dinner and drinks will start at 5:30 and presentations will occur about 7.

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

Fall Weather Brings Fall Stream Workdays

Everyone (yes, you!) can find a role at our Stream Team workdays. They are a great opportunity to do some good, make new friends and look with interest on a stretch of water you'll be back to drift a fly over.

We have a marvelous schedule lined up and details still being finalized ... we'll share the exact "where" and "what" closer to the dates. Rest assured, we'll be where the work is needed.

Please save the dates below. Jim Hess, Conservation Chair, did his best to schedule around fall events like Badger home games, Thanksgiving and hunting season. These are all Saturdays and the work goes from 9 to about Noon.

- **Sept 23** - TBD - either at a new property own by Dane County on Black Earth Creek or another property
- **Oct 7** - TBD - either at a new property own by Dane County on BEC or another property
- **Oct 21** - Hefty Creek, removing box elders and invasive woodies and installing brush bundles up stream from where we worked last spring
- **Nov 3** - Whitford Creek, TPE Sylvan Conservation Area, as it enters Dodge Branch. We had two workdays there last spring
- **Dec 2** - Kittleson Creek, removing willows just west of the bridge on Kittleson Creek

We look forward to seeing you! Contact Jim Hess if you have any questions. Thanks.

Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinic's "WOWSKI" Grows To New Heights

By Matthew Sment

Now in its 14th year of empowering woman anglers through outdoor education, the Women's On the Water Skills Intermediate Clinic (WOWSKI) grew to new heights in 2023. This standout program pairs enthusiastic woman anglers with volunteer guides on streams in the heart of Wisconsin's Driftless region. The clinic offers students three on the water sessions where they can tune up their skills, decide which they want to build, and then work with the guides to strengthen them.

WOWSKI has earned its reputation as a premiere learning opportunity. Students travel from across the country to participate, and it's not difficult to see why. The program is led by a powerhouse of inspiring, talented, and knowledgeable women who are firmly committed to its mission. The volunteer guides provide a deep well of experience to learn from. And to top that off, it all takes place on some of the country's best trout water!

After some refreshers on skills like rigging, casting, and mending, the students are assigned a guide and head for the water. In this friendly, low-pressure setting, the students receive feedback and encouragement as they build confidence. The guides do all they can to support the student's preferred learning experience and position them for success. At the end of the day, the students meet to discuss their experiences. WOWSKI is a safe, fun environment for women to learn to fly fish!

These clinics spotlight the value of programs that provide direct mentorship to under-served anglers in our community. They inspire, engage, and empower all involved. This year's event continued its established tradition of excellence by delivering another outstanding learning opportunity for woman anglers. Congratulations to the WOWSKI 2023 Students and Staff for an excellent Clinic! (*Great photos here and [even more, larger on swtu.org.](https://www.swtu.org)*)



Sugar River Land Purchase Proceeding – Key Vote is Now

Last month, we shared that Dane County Executive Joe Parisi announced the largest conservation land purchase in the history of the County: 625 acres on the Sugar River between Verona and Paoli. Several SWTU Board Members and representatives of other conservation groups attended the press conference and were overwhelmed by the news. This purchase will lead to great improvements in the Sugar River and the surrounding landscape and greatly increase outdoor public recreation.

We asked our members to contact their County Board members asking them to support this purchase ... and you did! It's passed all committees and the County Board plans to vote on it September 7 (the date this newsletter is being sent). Watch the news reports for the hopeful good word, and we'll provide an update at the September 12 meeting.

Survey Says ... Trout!

The DNR fish biologists in our area have been busy with more excellent reports; [check them out at Wisconsin DNR trout surveys](#) More specifically, Kirk Olson reports on the many trout streams of southern Crawford County, Nate Nye on the streams of the upper Baraboo River watershed in Sauk and Richland Counties, and Justin Haglund on the Pine River watershed of Richland County. Collectively these will point you to some streams not as well known as some of the stars of the Driftless Area but with just as many trout. More importantly each documents the conservation challenges and opportunities in all of them.

Justin will be our speaker at the October meeting to discuss that report, the brook trout of Melancthon, and maybe, just maybe, extend what of the most interesting volunteer opportunities SWTU has ever had.

Hot off the press: The DNR just released its surveys and assessments of the [West Br. of the Sugar watershed](#) and the [Little Sugar River watershed](#). Both are well worth reading but the first includes the DNR's analysis and recommendations for Mt. Vernon Creek, one of the most important trout streams in Dane County and always a focus of our attention and fishing efforts. These reports also represent Dan Oele's swan song as the fish biologist for Dane, Green and Rock Counties. Dan has received a promotion to another DNR position. The quality of these reports remind us how lucky we were to work with Dan.

Memorial for Todd Hanson

The summer edition of the Wisconsin Trout newspaper shared the [sad news of Todd Hanson's passing](#). Todd was a member of SWTU and a friendly face at many of our events. As you can read in Wisconsin Trout, Todd also played a large role at the state level. He will be missed and we wanted to share information on his memorial.

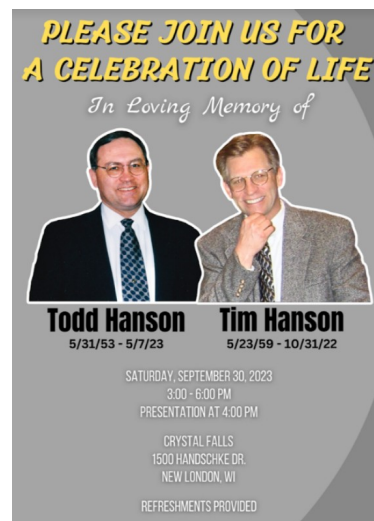
Learn What Your Board's Been Up To

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!

Jeff Bunch	Patrick Fritz
Hayden Mauk	Michael Breunig
Aimee Arnoldussen	Gus Bick
Colin Malin	Eric Statz
Brent Schmaling	Tina Poster
Jon Sharp	Joseph Sanford
Jeffrey Neterval	Ken Genskow
Elliot Tanin	Elizabeth Seyer
John Hunter	David Klingbeil
Steve Verhage	



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

Fly tying owes much to Charles Cotton, who in 1676 authored 'Part II' of Isaac Walton's classic *The Compleat Angler*. Prior to Cotton, descriptions of artificial flies and how to tie them were sketchy at best. Cotton gave detailed instructions concerning insects, their imitation, tying materials, methods of construction, and the best months for each fly's use. His flies were remarkably modern in appearance, being small, sparsely dressed, and neat. Cotton's meticulous approach and precise descriptions began the rich literature of fly-tying that we enjoy today.

No material was more important to Cotton than his bag of fur dubbings. He wrote of them with great affection and praised their ability to imitate natural insects. Speaking as Piscator to Viator in *The Compleat Angler*, Cotton wrote:

"Piscator: *Come, give me my dubbing bag here presently; and now, sir, since I find you so honest a man, I will make no scruple to lay open my treasure before you.*

Viator: *Did ever anyone see the like! What a heap of trumpery is here! Certainly, never an angler in Europe has his shop half so well furnished as you have."*

The softness, shine, and buoyancy of natural fur and hair are unsurpassed for imitating insect bodies on wet flies and nymphs. Fur transmits light *through* the fibers, something that Cotton understood well. While being tutored on fly tying, Viator described a dark fur dubbing as "*very black*", to which Piscator responded:

"It appears so in the hand; but step to the door and hold it up betwixt your eye and the sun, and it will appear a shining red'.

A thinly dubbed body of fur applied over a thread base whose color matches a natural insect and shows

through overlying fur beautifully imitates insect translucency. As the fur soaks up water, it becomes increasingly soft, flexible, lifelike, and appealing to trout.

Dave Whitlock (1934-2022) was a lifelong Oklahoman who educated generations of Americans on the delights of both cold- and warm-water fly fishing. His beautiful writings, remarkable artwork, uncanny teaching abilities, and friendly personality demystified our seemingly complex sport and made it approachable by beginners and experts alike. He was (and still is!) one of the most influential fly anglers of the 20th century. Whitlock received essentially every major award in fly fishing. For example, *Fly Fisherman* magazine completed in 2021 the daunting task of selecting the four most influential fly fishers of the past 50 years for a figurative "Mt. Rushmore of Fly Fishing". Dave Whitlock shared the honor with Joe Brooks, Lee Wulff, and Lefty Kreh. Remarkable honors for four remarkable anglers.

Whitlock learned fly fishing and tying at a young age reading his grandfather's *Field & Stream* magazines. He did not have access to uncommon or precious tying materials, but he made do with the rewards of his Oklahoma hunting (rabbits, squirrels, game birds, etc.). In time, Whitlock designed hundreds of fly patterns, most of which featured such "blue collar" materials. Dave's own "Mt. Rushmore" of his popular fly designs would probably be the Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph, Dave's Hopper, NearNuff Crayfish, and Dave's Diving Frog.

The Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph is an impressionistic fly that is effective in virtually all trout waters. When asked to identify his single most effective fly in all waters and under all conditions, Whitlock confidently answered the RFSHN. He developed the pattern in the late 1960s, having been influenced by the writings of Polly Rosborough and others. Like other champion nymphs such as the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear, the RFSHN owes its success to the magic of soft animal fur and, ultimately, to the *heap of trumpery* in Charles Cotton's dubbing bag.

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----- Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph -----

Hook: Nymph hook, size #2 - #20

Weight: Underbody of nontoxic wire (optional on small hook sizes)

Thread: 8/0 Uni or UTC-70, black or orange

Tail: Small tuft of fur from a red fox squirrel back

Rib: Oval gold tinsel or orange-pearlescent Flashabou

Abdomen: Belly fur of a red fox squirrel, mixed 50/50 with 'sienna' or 'fox tan' Antron dubbing

Thorax: Back fur of a red fox squirrel, mixed 50/50 with charcoal Antron dubbing

Hackle: Partridge back feather or dark-ginger hen saddle (one turn); optional for small hook sizes but pick out fur fibers of the thorax



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:

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