

Newscasts

November 2023 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Fly-Fishing Alpine Lakes: How to Catch the 'Dumbest' Trout in the World Dale Osthoff will share fishing stories, photos and tips at our Tuesday, November 14, Chapter Meeting

Dale Osthoff is a guide and fly tyer with twenty years of fly-fishing experience. Based out of Madison, he specializes in active presentation techniques for the spring creeks of the Driftless Area, frequenting dozens of streams throughout the season. Dale has also fished the Rocky Mountain high country extensively, chasing the lofty benchmarks – trophies caught and miles tramped – set by his dad and mentor, Rich.

He enjoys sharing trout fishing's distinct appeal through photos and video, using images to create educational fishing presentations. We will all be treated to just such an event at our November 14 Chapter Meeting – Dale will cover successful strategies for targeting trophy goldens, cutts and brookies on alpine lakes (though many of these strategies work for stillwater trout fishing at any elevation).



Often, you'll only get one shot at big cruisers, and Dale will help you streamline the process of fly selection, approach, and presentation during these anxious encounters. He will also provide tips for studying and reaching these lakes; some of the best bang for the buck DIY fishing destinations in the country.

The meeting is Tuesday, November 14, at Schwoegler's Bowling on Grand Canyon Dr. on Madison's west side. Dinner and drinks will start at 5:30 p.m. and presentations will occur about 7.

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

SWTU Fly-tying Courses – 2024 Free of charge – Registration opens soon

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 starting Wednesday January 17, 2024. Classes consist of instructor-led demonstrations and hands-on tutorials. The courses are completely free of charge, and all materials needed during in-class instruction are provided. You need only supply fly-tying tools and thread, 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.

Both beginning and intermediate courses meet on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Fitchburg Community Center (5510 Lacy Rd., Fitchburg) beginning January 17, 2024. Courses run for eight consecutive Wednesdays (final class March 6, 2024).

Advanced registration is required! Register online at the Fitchburg Recreation Department (<https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/fitchburg/activity/search>). If you've not previously created a customer account with Fitchburg Recreation, you must do so before registering. Online registration will be activated by Fitchburg beginning sometime in early November.

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

Did the DNR and SWTU save the brook trout of Melancthon Creek? We won't know for a couple of years but we sure tried

From a Monday through Thursday, a crew of DNR staff and SWTU volunteers captured and tagged brown trout in a long stretch of Melancthon Creek and then released them far downstream into the Pine River. Justin Haglund, the DNR fish biologist for Richland and Iowa Counties, hopes the removal of the brown trout will help the wild, native brook trout of the creek re-build their numbers.

This is a longer report of a totally unique volunteer opportunity that continues the story we started with last month's Chapter Meeting. Enjoy!

Several SWTU members volunteered on the crew each day, including several Board Members, and Mike Kuhr, formerly the State TU President. Justin and Lloyd Meng, his chief technician, led the DNR crew, most of whom were fish techs from the Southern District of the DNR.

The week started cold, blustery and miserable but improved over the last day and a half. The routine was electroshocking the browns, transporting them to the processing area, tagging them and releasing them in the Pine River. Three 2-3 person teams were in the stream and another 4-5 were processing the trout. Besides pit-tagging 1,000 browns greater than 6 inches, all the trouts' adipose fins were clipped. The tagged fish will be detected by sensors if they return to the creek and the fin clips will enable the DNR to determine how well the transported fish are surviving and growing in the Pine.



Some of the work was obviously hard – wading in the streams and shocking fish. Some was tougher than we imagined – as in bending over a table and clipping squirming trout for 5 hours. The DNR is wholly professional in handling fish and accurately recording data: we learned from the best.

Overall, we tagged 1,000 Brown Trout over 6 inches and removed another 2,112 under 6 inches for a grand total of 3,112 that were moved to the Pine River. (I know where I'll fish in Richland County next year.) The browns ranged in size from about 2.3 inches to a bit over 14.

All worked hard and well, but two standouts emerged on the two days I worked there. On Wednesday, a shocking crew worked part of the stream that ran through a sedge meadow, always a miserable trek to traverse. The UTV could not cross the meadow so our own Bob Brewer carried several buckets of trout through the meadow to the processing area, a slog of several hundred yards. So *what?* you might think. The buckets were 5 gallons and when full of water and trout weighed between 40 and 50 pounds. Uf da.

On Thursday, Justin was thinking that a deep bridge hole held enough larger trout to fill out the quota of pit tags. Much of the bottom was deep silt. Lloyd took the deeper side of the pool. At one point he was sinking, up to the top of his waders, feeling some cold water and unnerving electricity. Even as he was disappearing his right arm kept netting fish and not losing a one! He extricated himself and we had dozens and maybe a hundred trout out of the hole, most bigger than elsewhere on the creek.



All of us SWTU volunteers are:

1. Grateful for this opportunity. We helped the DNR complete some challenging work and perhaps have given the Melancthon brookies a second chance.

2. Grateful for the DNR crew. They are professional, energetic, enthusiastic, hard working and a ton of fun. They were also exceedingly kind and patient with us, some of whom (as in me) made some bonehead mistakes. We learned. I think I could pass an undergraduate course in fin clipping. We also learned more of what fish biologists and techs have to do in the field. For one, they have to know how to handle a plethora of gear: trucks, UTVs, trailers, tanks, pumps, generators, etc. Not easy being a good biologist or tech.
3. Grateful for a landowner. On Wednesday an older gentleman watched us for a while in the afternoon. The next day we had to work on a part of the stream on private property and thought we'd have to shuttle back and forth between that site and the DNR processing area. He was the landowner of that area and invited Justin to set up on the stream bank on his land. This saved us beaucoup time and trouble.

He and his family have lived on the creek since 1943. His Mom and Aunt loved the creek and fished it every day of the season with cane poles and worms. When the DNR changed the stream to Catch and Release, neither ever fished it again. The family was not happy and became incensed when the then Fish Biologist (this was decades ago) refused to share the data which he claimed supported the regulation change. That dispute, according to the landowner, went to the DNR Board. The family then discovered that, in their judgment, the data did not support the biologist's position. The landowner is a real gentleman, kind, honest and intelligent (he taught middle school for 36 years). What really hurt was when he said: "The fly fishers supported the change. They were selfish. They wanted all the fish for themselves." Even if that's not completely true, I can see why he'd think that. That with that history and feelings, he would so welcome a DNR crew and a bunch of SWTU volunteers speaks to his generous spirit. BTW, he enjoyed the work so much he recorded data for us for three hours.

Let's conclude with some obvious fishing advice: Don't fish Melancthon next year; do fish the Pine. As Justin told me: "If you can't catch trout there, don't blame me."

Take care,
Topf Wells

Women's Fly Fishing Clinics: Registration now open

Please register now or share this with someone who may be interested. These fill up and we want our members to have an opportunity to take part in these groundbreaking clinics. ([Check out the great story and pictures from this year's successful clinic.](#))

There are two types of clinics detailed below with links and QR codes for more information. Both are set in Westby, WI (near Viroqua, in Wisconsin's Driftless Area) and the cost is \$355 until April 1 and \$375 after that.

Basics Clinic By Women For Women: June 14-18th, 2024

Learn how to choose proper equipment, tie knots, cast, read water, select the proper fly and time on the water. You will learn new tactics, regardless of your level of ability. Equipment available for use. <https://web.cvent.com/event/cdce6e2c-68c0-418b-9df7-80ab071e7e2b/summary>



On the Water Skills Clinic – Intermediate: June 12-14, 2024

Personalized instruction streamside. Tune up workshops by women instructors to refresh skills in casting, matching the hatch & reading the water. Fish WI finest trout streams with experienced anglers. <https://web.cvent.com/event/64a51c1b-ba47-48a7-a48a-f823041a9307/summary>



A Big Day on Big Spring: Stream Team Report 1

By Topf Wells

The DNR firm of Justin, Lloyd & Jarret convened with the Nohr Chapter and SWTU to begin the ecological transformation of Big Spring from the bridge at the big spring to the one at Pine Tree Rd. Currently much of the creek corridor and surrounding land is saturated with willows, making accessing or fishing the creek difficult and issuing a standing invitation to beavers to take up residence. The most prominent feature of that land should be an oak savanna.

The DNR team is planning this work day and long-term project carefully and they were assisted by Ted Swenson of Nohr (the work day was a Nohr event) and our



Jim Hess. SWTU was honored to be invited to help on Nohr's project, especially in the Blue River watershed, the scene of so many Nohr restorations.

There was a total of 17 workers, including SWTU, Nohr Chapter, DNR staff, and one volunteer from the Chicago's Elliott Donnelly Chapter. Our next three workdays will be closer to Chicago; maybe we can generate some interest.

Sawyers were running brush saws and chainsaws. Cutting willows without treating the stumps is futile. Dedicated sprayers treated 90% of the stumps, which given the heavy cover of goldenrod and reed canary grass was extraordinarily good. The rest of us hauled and stacked to the delight of this winter's rabbits and perhaps a bear or two. (Some confirmed bear sightings have occurred not far from this site.)

A casual onlooker might question the chance of oaks prospering but we found a surprising and pleasing number of young oaks, now liberated from their willow rivals.

The day went extremely well with about 4 acres cleared and treated. The site is downstream of the upstream bridge. Now you'd have an easy walk to Big Spring as it runs along a steep and heavily wooded bluff. The creek is lovely although small enough to be tough fishing. The hillside is gorgeous and just about to hit peak fall color.

Everyone pitched in to great effect. Carol Murphy, president of Nohr, greeted and thanked us and brought delicious cheese, apples, and summer sausage. With Topf Well's usual complement of brownies and pork sticks, we did not leave hungry.



Tired, though, for sure. The walking was tough but the brush saws provided good paths in addition to heaps of willow.

Big thanks to all, especially Jim Hess, whose planning is essential to these being fun and safe events. Some box elders were hiding amongst the willows. Jim and Bob Harrison got them all.

Many thanks to Jim Beecher for these photos. [See more \(and a few from Jim Hess\) in the story on swtu.org.](#)

A Darn Near Perfect Workday: Stream Team Report 2

By Topf Wells

SWTU members and allies worked together clearing and brush bundling along Hefty Creek. The creek's brown trout and anglers will be happy with the result.

We were at the top end of the Rudd easement where the DNR had not been able to work during the big restoration we helped fund. This location had a stream bank with old rip rap that had been back cut. As a result the bank was badly eroding. It also had the three woody amigos we often encounter: invasive honeysuckle, invasive buckthorn, and box elder.

Key players were Vince Schmitz and Pat Gorman, DNR project biologists. Vince has helped us plan and worked with us on many projects while Pat is new to the team. They were in the water along with SWTU members Ben Mechelke and Zach Oluf. Bob Harrison and Jim Hess handled the chainsaws while the rest of us hauled and trimmed brush.



We learn something new every work day; the trimming came with today's lesson. The combination of the deteriorating rip rap and the clay soil of the bank caused Vince and Pat to modify the usual bundling process. They used small brush and tied it down even more frequently and thoroughly than usual. That meant they needed the brush trimmed and shaped more than usual. We thought of ourselves as Vince's Custom Shop.

By the end of the morning, we had another world class brush bundle that will stabilize the bank, deepen a sweet little run, and offer happy homes to bugs and small trout.

We also made a dent in a thriving population of woody invasives. For the angler, while the top end of the easement was clearly signed, most would not want to penetrate the mess at the bridge. Our work makes a long and valuable easement more accessible (which, after all, is the point of an easement).

The weather was brisk, which prevented any overheating and whetted our appetites. We polished off a bag of cheese curds, 3 dozen brownies, and 2 packages of pork sticks. Vince noticed an increase in productivity after our break so the calories acted as fuel.

Thanks to all but, as always and especially to Jim Hess (*running the chainsaw pictured at right*). Once again he planned this carefully with visits with Vince and Bob Rudd, the landowner (who also helped today). With the trailer unavailable he brought all the equipment. He ended the day by tracking down an elusive grove of buckthorn. He had started the day by brush sawing a trail into the work site, which increased our productivity.

Two recommendations: think of fishing Hefty. It has miles of easements and this restoration will be maturing by next season. In addition the easement upstream was restored probably via NRCS several years ago. Secondly, if you have small kids or grandkids, visit the Black Earth Creek Children's Museum. Sally and I stopped by this afternoon and were blown away. It's lovely, well laid out, with many different rooms and activities. The manager said it's popular with parents of young children who want to visit an excellent Children's Museum but without the crowds one often finds in Madison's.



Top photo is from Jim Hess, lower one from Dyan Lesnik. [See more \(and a few from Jim Beecher\) in the story on swtu.org.](#)

Dane County Offering Women's Chainsaw Workshops

For the first time, Dane County is offering Women's Chainsaw Workshops. They will be hosting 3 rounds of 2-day courses for level 1 & 2 certifications. This course is free of charge and open to women and gender minorities of all experience levels. Completing a course like this is required of all sawyers at our workdays. [Learn more and register.](#)

Finance Committee Seeks Members

By Marty Chiaro, Treasurer

We are seeking volunteers to serve on SWTU's Finance Committee. Some of the primary functions of the Finance Committee include:

- Serve as a financial sounding board for the Treasurer and Board of Directors.
- Review the annual operating budget and provide a recommendation on the budget to the BOD.
- Review the annual Operating Report submitted to TU National.
- Review the annual tax return and prepare a recommendation to the BOD.
- Provide feedback on various financial analyses prepared to support major Chapter operational or financial initiatives.

I anticipate we will have somewhere between 6-8 Finance meetings a year, in addition to meeting prep time and occasional participation on various research or finance related projects. Committee members will have 2 year terms.

Please contact Marty Chiaro, SWTU Treasurer, no later than October 31, if you have an interest in serving on the Committee. chiaromt@gmail.com

Thank you for your consideration.

** Editor's personal note: Treasurer is a big and important job for our Chapter and we owe Marty all the help he can get. If you feel you're a fit for this, please at least reach out and explore the opportunity.*



You can help! Short-term Volunteer Opportunities

Your chapter needs volunteers to join the fundraising event team, without which we may not be able to host another fun and social event in the Spring of 2024.

Also, your board wants to improve the chapter's communication skills. To achieve this, we are forming a communications team which needs your help to expand reach and impact.

Both teams have a short window of commitment.

Contact John Freeborg at john-tu@freeborg.com or 608-695-8544 to learn more.

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.)

Porknoy Easement: Finalized and Ready to Fish Next Season

The Pokorny easement has been finalized and will be open for fishing at the start of the next season. This is a lovely easement on the upper part of Sawmill Creek (Class 2 trout stream in the NW corner of Green County) and the site of a great work day this past spring. It's one of the easements that resulted from the DNR/Pecatonica Pride/SWTU outreach in this area. Thanks to the Pokornys, Pec Pride – especially April Prussia, Steve Fabos and Marci Hess – and the great DNR team, especially Dan Oele, who worked long, hard, and patiently on this easement.

Welcome New Members

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

Jason Klein
Alex Anderson-Buhle
William Huth
Amanda Pun
Bruce Loeb

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

Stoneflies are sometimes the forgotten insects of a trout stream. Their numbers rarely exceed those of mayflies or caddisflies, but stoneflies hatch steadily throughout the season. They are at times one of few food sources available to trout. Brief hatches of large stoneflies, such as salmonflies and golden stones, are legendary on western rivers, but day-in and day-out, small-bodied stoneflies provide a dependable diet for trout. Common names of the smaller species include Snowflies, Willowflies, Roachflies, Sallflies, and Needleflies. In Wisconsin, small early-season black or brown stoneflies are frequently seen crawling on snowbanks in late winter.

As the name might suggest, stoneflies inhabit stony bottomed, high gradient, silt free streams. Stoneflies require well oxygenated water for survival. Thus, mountain creeks, turbulent rivers, riffles, and pocket water are prime stonefly habitat. Hatching stoneflies do not emerge through the water column. Instead, the nymphs crawl atop streamside rocks or woody debris, where they molt to winged adults.

Stonefly imitations date to the very beginnings of fly fishing. Excepting fragmentary references of fishing in Roman times, the first literary description of fishing with artificial flies is *The Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, attributed to Dame Juliana Berners and published in *The Book of St. Albans* (1496). Berners described twelve artificial flies, one of which – the Stone Fly – imitates its namesake insect. The Stone Fly is one of only two flies in *The Treatyse* whose counterpart among natural insects is unambiguous.

Because stoneflies are insects of turbulent water, they are especially significant to fly anglers of the English north. Rivers of the Yorkshire Dales drain limestone

formations of the Pennine Mountains, just south of the border with Scotland. The rivers are swift and rocky, and they contain large populations of stoneflies. The Yorkshire Dales is an area of striking natural and societal beauty. Moorland plateaus, rocky crags, beautiful valleys, waterfalls, quaint villages, stone bridges, and green upland pastures enclosed by dry-stone walls provide magnificent views in all directions. It thus seems fitting that some of the most beautiful trout flies ever conceived sprang from these sparkling waters. Flies that originated in The Yorkshire Dales are variously called 'North Country Flies', 'Hackle Flies', 'Yorkshire Spiders', 'Wingless Wets', or simply 'soft-hackled flies' today.

The landmark book of North Country flies and fishing is *Yorkshire Trout Flies* by Thomas Pritt. Published in 1885, it quietly but persuasively solidified the merits of upstream nymphing with flies whose soft feathery materials imitate movements of a struggling insect. Pritt emphasized the importance of stonefly imitations throughout the angling year, and he described the Dark Spanish Needle as being one of his favorites, because it was consistently effective on Yorkshire rivers.

A Dark Spanish Needle (known also as a Needle Brown, Dark Needle, and Brown Owl) imitates small dark stoneflies of the genus *Leuctra*. They are abundant in the English north and in any stonefly-friendly stream of North America. "Needle" of its name refers to the long thin body of *Leuctra* adults, which roll their wings tightly around the body when at rest. "Spanish" refers to the color of the adult wings, which are a dark steely blue similar to that of unpolished steel sewing needles. Such needles were imported by England from Spain in large numbers in the early 19th century, which is when John Swarbrick first gave the fly its name (*Wharfedale Flies*, 1807). Stash a few Spanish Needles in your fly box and, when you next encounter small stoneflies, make sure some American trout feel the pointed end of a Spanish Needle. ©Rusty Dunn, 2023

----- Dark Spanish Needle -----

Pearsall's Gossamer Silk thread is no longer made. Alternative brands, however, such as YLI, Ephemera, and Morus silk threads, are readily available.

-
- Hook:** Wet fly / nymph hook, size "0" (modern #15)
 - Thread:** Pearsall's Gossamer silk, hot orange (#19)
 - Wings:** A feather from the darkest part of a brown owl's wing. Substitute with English woodcock, red grouse, brown-phase partridge, or other mottled brown feather
 - Body:** Tying thread
 - Head:** Peacock herl
-



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	Steve Musser
Vice President	Topf Wells
Secretary	Henry Nehls-Lowe
Treasurer	Marty Chiaro
State Council Rep.	Michael Williamson
Board Member	Dyan Lesnik
Board Member	Jim Beecher
Board Member	Tom Thrall
Board Member	John Freeborg
Board Member	Don Golembiewski
Board Member	Kevin Maes
Past President	Mark Maffit
Newscasts Editor	Drew Kasel
Conservation Committee Chair	Jim Hess
Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair	Tina Murray
Youth Education Chair for SWTU	Tina Murray

stevemusser@msn.com
topfwells@gmail.com
henry.nehlslowe@gmail.com
chiaromt@gmail.com
mlwilliamson.53@gmail.com
dmlgriffin@gmail.com
jamesfbeecher@gmail.com
tpthrall@gmail.com
john-tu@freeborg.com
don.golembiewski@gmail.com
kevin.maes@outlook.com
mark.maffitt@gmail.com
madkasel@gmail.com
jimhess5599@gmail.com
swtu.women.diversity@gmail.com
swtu.women.diversity@gmail.com

Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 45555
Madison, WI 53744-5555

