

Newscasts

March 2024 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Get your tickets now – 3rd Annual Spring Fair Fundraiser

Join us **Saturday, April 20, 2024**, for another fun-filled, social day of camaraderie. This is a one-week shift from what we previously shared. We'll be returning to the East Side Club on the shores of Lake Monona with hopefully stunning weather this year. As in the past, this is a ticketed event and tickets are required to enter.

[Buy your tickets at this secure online site.](https://swtu.org/springfundraiser)

Offline sales coordinated by John Freeborg – contact john-tu@freeborg.com. Tickets can also be purchased at SWTU chapter meetings on 3/12 and 4/9 from Topf Wells at the front table – cash or check only. Students use STUDENT discount code during checkout for 50% off any admission ticket. Must present valid student ID at event for admittance.

Learn more at: <https://swtu.org/springfundraiser>

Spring Fair Marketing Help

Do you have graphic design experience (or know someone that does)? The SWTU Spring Fair committee urgently needs a marketing manager. You'll help make the 3rd annual fund raising event a success and further our strong cold water conservation efforts – all while having some fun.

This role creates posters, handouts and various other small signage. Design files from previous years are available. Additionally, the role takes the lead in drafting promotional messaging for social media channels. Assistance in posting to each channel is available. Please get in touch with John Freeborg john-swtu@freeborg.com or 608-695-8544.



Taste the Great Destinations

Serving up a mouthwatering presentation at our Tuesday, March 12 Meeting
(this is rescheduled from the January meeting canceled due to snow)

Ben Lubchansky will be presenting tips and tricks (and trips!) to bring gourmet elements to your destination angling and adventure trips. From planning and packing to improvising in the field, Ben will give you the info you need to ensure your adventures are unique, memorable, and beyond the standard package. Ben will discuss his 'Casting and Cookery' series of angling trips as well as things you will want to know to make your own trips more exciting and enjoyable – whether stalking bonefish in the islands or overnighing with old friends in the Driftless. Ben will cover equipment, ingredients, meal planning, ingredient sourcing, foraging, dining out, and managing rental home assets and liabilities all in addition to presenting his own uniquely inspired trips featuring great destinations at the best time of year and the fish and food that makes them special.

Ben has been a cook and trip leader on group trips to the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Louisiana, and Cape Cod, as well as here in the Driftless and on the Wisconsin River. He has guided for trout and smallmouth bass in Wisconsin and is a commercial fly tyer. He has been a professional cook for over 30 years and is a staunch supporter of SWTU. Please learn more about Ben, his work, his upcoming and past trip offerings, and his fly tying business at www.608csk.com/general-1 and www.twowickflies.com.



Please join us at Schwoegler's on Grand Canyon Drive on Madison's West Side on Tuesday, February 13. Dinner and drinks available at 5:30 with Ben's presentation starting about 7 p.m.

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

Looking ahead to our April 9 meeting: DARE to Make a Difference

Peter Jonas, the newest member of TU DARE's staff, will speak at the April meeting to let us know what DARE is up to and how we can help.

Peter is a former member of SWTU. He moved to the northern part of the Driftless and was a big part of TU chapters' and DARE's work to secure access to and improve trout streams in that area.

DARE has ambitious plans to restore trout streams, improve connectivity, and better maintain easements. We'll have more info on Peter's presentation in the April newsletter but please plan to welcome Peter to his first home with TU.

Sara Johnson passes

Sara Elaine Johnson of Salem, Oregon, died on February 3, 2024, after a long battle with cancer. Good friends were holding her hands on the final stretch of her life journey.

Sara was born on the South Pacific desert island of Canton, lived as a child in Kabul, Afghanistan, then moved with her family to Washington, DC. Sara worked for National Public Radio as the National Training Coordinator, then moved to Wisconsin to complete her undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. There, she worked with UW-Madison's College of Agriculture and UW-Extension in natural resource policy and outreach.



In 1993, she co-founded and was the first executive director of the River Alliance of Wisconsin (RAW), a statewide citizen-advocacy organization for rivers. Under her leadership, RAW became nationally recognized for dam removal and river restoration. The restoration of the Baraboo River to a free-flowing state was one of Sara's most cherished achievements. She was also instrumental in a landmark settlement with Wisconsin Electric Power affecting 11 dams on the Menominee River system in Wisconsin and Michigan.

In 1998, Sara joined Trout Unlimited (TU) as the Director of Volunteer Operations. She led major initiatives to strengthen the grassroots chapters of TU, as well as leading TU's small dams program. In all her work, she recruited and supported women leaders to help broaden TU's conservation efforts amid the rapidly expanding angling community.

Sara next moved to California, where she worked in various consulting capacities, focusing on uniting social and natural resource sciences to address issues facing fisheries, watersheds, and rivers. She was particularly gifted in working in collaborative and conflict-resolving roles. Sara also authored several publications on dam removal.

Sara was energetic, enthusiastic, and sometimes just plain effervescent about rivers and the outdoors. She enjoyed flyfishing, hiking, her beloved dogs, and sharing experiences with friends. She dealt with life's many challenges with grace and determination. Sara was predeceased by her parents, Bess and Howard Johnson, and her brother, Michael. She is survived by her former spouse Todd Ambs and dear friends who will miss this gentle caring woman immensely. Sara loved music and was a huge John Prine fan.

Donations in her memory can be made to the River Alliance of Wisconsin or to the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Sara, her bright spirit and many accomplishments are well known to many of our members.

[Find more photos on swtu.org.](https://www.swtu.org)

*Memories they can't be
boughten*

*They can't be won at
carnivals for free*

Well, it took me years

To get those souvenirs

*And I don't know how they
slipped away from me*

— John Prine

Jim Addis passes

A committed conservationist and highly skilled administrator, the people and natural resources of Wisconsin are better for Jim's decades of exemplary service.

As stated in his obituary: In 1974, Jim joined the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a fisheries manager in the Southeast District. He quickly rose through the ranks, demonstrating exceptional leadership skills in various high-level administrative roles and successfully handling several complex and controversial natural resource management issues.

Jim Addis was a valued partner for SWTU and many other conservation organizations. You can read his full obituary at [the Ryan Funeral Home website](#).



SWTU Tentative 2024 Workdays (March update)

By Jim Hess, Conservation Chair

We look forward to seeing you at one or more of our spring workdays. It's a great way to meet new people, explore new water and make a difference for our cold water resource.

- April 6, 13, or 20 – Kittleson – planting trees on Hefty Farms Easement, located at the bridge on Kittleson Road and replacing some dead trees downstream. At this time not sure when the trees will be delivered but will be notified on April 1, so holding multiple dates. May need to plant trees on the same day as the Spring Fair, as we did last year.
- April 6 or 13 – Kittleson – removing willows on Hefty Farms Easement. This is the same location we worked last fall.
- April 20 – SWTU Spring Fair Fundraiser (may be planting trees in the morning like last year, if necessary)
- April 27 – Conley Lewis Creek in Iowa County. A joint workday with the Nohr Chapter. Justin Haglund, DNR Fish Biologist, and his crew will be joining us. Conley Lewis feeds into the Dodge Branch Creek upstream from Banner Road. This is located near our previous workdays on Whitford Creek. We will be removing box elders and other invasive woodies. Plus, we will be throwing out native prairie seed to create a native buffer to this stream. Volunteer Mike Krause will be bringing his skid steer to help create burn piles. Mike brought the skid steer to the Badger Mill Creek workday a couple of years ago.
- May 18 – Big Spring – joint workday with Nohr Chapter, assisting the DNR in removing willows. Justine Haglund, DNR Fish Biologist, and his crew will be joining us again. This is a continuation from last year.
- June 1 – Sawmill Creek (Pokorny Easement) – removing invasive woodies and installing a brush bundle. This will be the 3rd workday at this site.

More specific information for each workday will be provided prior to each workday.

Chainsaw Training Opportunities

Anyone wishing to run a chainsaw at a Workday must complete a training that meets FISTA standards to do so. It's a rule of the county and just makes us all safer. Dane County is offering sessions, which [you can register for here](#).

SWTU Helps Fund an Intern

The SWTU Board recently and unanimously approved \$3,750 to help fund a DNR intern for a summer of work. A generous donation from the Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance covered the remaining funds for the position. The request came from Kim Kuberly and Camille Bruhn, the DNR Water Quality biologists for this part of the state, for an intern to help them complete their summer stream and river surveys. They need the intern to complete the work and some budget problems put that hire in doubt. Camille and Kim often work with the Fish Biologists; their surveys are often extremely helpful to those biologists as they assess trout streams in our area. Their summer work plan includes important surveys of trout streams including the evaluation of restorations on Kittleson and Pleasant Valley Creeks and continuing study of the impacts of New Zealand Mudsnaills in nearby trout streams. We'll welcome Kim, Camille, and the intern to a fall meeting when they'll share info and photos on what they discovered this summer.

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.)

What Do We Do With the \$

By Topf Wells

You'll read and hear a lot about our Spring Fundraiser. Great, great fun but some of you might wonder what we do with the money?

Some recent examples:

- \$3,750 for a DNR summer intern to help complete stream surveys (see the article in this newsletter).
- \$500 for native grass seed for a DNR easement on Conley Lewis Creek. As the DNR and we prepared for a work day, the Fish Biologist convinced the landowners to convert a 3.2 acre streamside area from row crops to a buffer with native vegetation. We'll buy a variety of native grass seeds for the 500 and our Nohr friends will provide an excellent mix of native wildflowers. The results will be less runoff, more infiltration, less pesticides in the creek, less erosion and more bugs in the stream.
- \$2,500 for expanded and improved water quality monitoring on Black Earth Creek. We became a member of a group of local governments and conservation organizations to enable the USGS to improve round the clock monitoring of the trout water on BEC. The DNR and others will receive immediate notification if certain problems arise, like a dangerous change in water chemistry.
- \$3,000 to help the Nohr Chapter restore a headwater stretch of the Blue River; one of two big projects we've supported on the Blue River this year.
- \$1,000 to help The Prairie Enthusiasts transform 10 acres of row crops and sediment into a wetland within a few feet of the Williams Barneveld Branch. We held a work day on the creek with TPE two years ago and saw how much that wetland would benefit the creek.

We have some requests pending, which we're still researching. The DNR and Dane County might need about 4K to supply material for a huge restoration on the West Branch of the Sugar River. Another donation of that amount would help the DNR buy a mower to improve access and vegetation along trout stream easements (and perhaps better control wild parsnip along some streams). The DNR and TU DARE will soon request a donation for the DNR's stream brushing crew works on many trout streams in our area throughout the winter.



Will You Step up for SWTU?

Annual elections to the SWTU Board will occur at the April meeting. We have three Board vacancies to fill. Service on the Board is great assistance to SWTU. It's a nice mix of work and the satisfaction of helping us get a lot of cool stuff done. Any interest? Please contact Topf Wells or any board member listed at the end of the newsletter. You can also contact any of those folks if you're a member who wants to help us find new Board Members – we need some members to serve on that committee.

More Good News from a DNR Watershed Assessment

Nate Nye, the DNR Fish Biologist for Columbia and Sauk Counties, just published his [assessment of the Honey and Wilson Creed watersheds](#). You really, really want to read this one. It's thorough and thoughtful. Some of the news about Honey Creek is that some of the improved and eased sections of the stream have high numbers of trout. Have you heard of Wilson Creek? Not me. Nate might arouse your interest with the news that Wilson Creek has a thriving population of wild brook trout with great growth rates. No public access so if you fish it, you'll have to have landowner permission or be careful in exercising your Public Trust rights. Nate's report has some great recommendations, one of which is to give the DNR authority to pursue easements along Wilson Creek for fishing access and habitat protection and improvement

And speaking of the DNR ... remember that it's time to renew your fishing license (and trout stamp!) for another year.

Vets on the Fly

By Dyan Lesnik

Another great month of Veterans on the Fly. We started off the month of fly tying with a Cicada. Next up was a Valentine's Day Griffith's Gnat. We finished up the month of February with a Frenchie and an Early Black Stone Fly. Next up on March 6th, we'll tie up a Bad Hair Day.

All Veterans and their family are welcome and there is never any cost. Come out to VFW Post 1318 (2740 Ski Lane, Madison). We start tying at 5:30 and you can come early for dinner. We plan to meet every Wednesday in February and March to tie new patterns. April will switch to fishing at various locations (dependent on the weather). [Learn more at their Facebook page.](#)

Cicadas, You Say?

This spring could see an epic cicada hatch, which may lead to some epic fishing! This [article from Scientific Angler](#) covers the topic quite well for those interested in tying, fishing or historical etymological events.

Help Out Project Green Teen

For many (many) years, our chapter members have helped teens with tying, casting and fishing as part of the Project Green Teen program at Malcom Shabazz High School on Madison's north side. Brian Counselman, PGT Coordinator, has put together a wonderful flier of PGT work done, student testimony and [opportunities this spring to help pass along your knowledge to some bright young minds](#). Take a look and help out if you possibly can!

TU at Midwest Outdoor Leadership Conference

By Henry Nehls-Lowe

Five SWTU members and Carol Murphy, NohrTU President, recently traveled to Upham Woods for the UW Hoofer-sponsored 2024 Midwest Outdoor Leadership Conference. Eighty representatives from midwest college & university outing clubs attended this morning's workshops, so we were disappointed that our first session drew only a few of these outdoor-enthusiastic-twenty-somethings, but how can "Driftless is a Fly Fishing Destination" compete against "Wildland Firefighting in Alaska" or "Dispersed Camping and Budget Adventures?" We appreciate that Scott Allen, Wisconsin TU Council Chair, was able to drop in for this session. Next we had solid turnout for the two 30-minute casting clinics, where I saw some gorgeous loops.

Then, at the afternoon Networking & Careers session, our table had a continuous stream of visitors who eagerly chatted with us about TU, our professions, our shared love of the outdoors, their career hopes and dreams, and, of course, fly fishing. Andy Morton wisely set up his fly tying kit and soon had a series of newbie fly tying students knock out their first fly. We all came away inspired from being around these energized and passionate young adults. Many thanks to Andy Morton, Tom Thrall, Adam Balin, Dave Fowler, Paul Williams, Chester Chung and, of course, Carol Murphy. See some nice casting action in this video: https://youtu.be/2DHtgLU5aCE?si=R_r3V8mETuKJroR8.



Welcome New Members

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

Riley Bellin
Ross Hazlewood

Craig Bessette
Kevin Horvath

James Myrland
David Walker

Phillip Kesling

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 has 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

The year is 1975, in early summer. An experienced angler fishes a PMD hatch on Nelson's Spring Creek in Livingston, MT. Like nearby DePuy and Armstrong Spring Creeks, Nelson's is a short, free-flowing, tributary of the Yellowstone River. Its water is crystal clear, glassy smooth, and incredibly rich with aquatic insects. Hatches, especially those of PMDs in June and July, can be of biblical proportions. It's no accident that this part of Montana is called Paradise Valley. Nelson's trout are abundant and large, but they are fished heavily and have reputations for humbling both beginner and expert alike. They've seen every fly in the Umpqua catalog and are very wary of imitations.

The angler stands mid-stream as thousands of PMD "little sailboats" drift by drying their wings. Trout rise everywhere. The angler casts PMD imitations of many different designs to risers, but he has little success. Trout continue to rise steadily, but not to his flies. The fish are simply too selective, and the angler's frustration is building. Upon close inspection, the angler decides that fish are not taking adult duns. Instead, they are taking unidentifiable "little yellow specs" floating at the surface. The angler eventually ties on a small mayfly nymph, presents it subsurface, and hooks a nice trout. While releasing the fish, he examines the back of the trout's mouth, just forward of the gullet. There he observes a wad of PMDs, all of which exhibit an identical intermediate stage of emergence. The "little yellow specs" proved to be the beginnings of adult PMDs pushing out of their nymphal skins. Most of the body is still nymphal in color and character, but a small bit of yellow (adult) PMD protrudes from the shuck. The angler has nothing to imitate this intermediate stage, but he resolves to tie some flies that imitate the 'little yellow specs' that evening.

The angler returns to Nelson's the next day armed with freshly minted flies tied in his motel room. He encounters the same PMD hatch and enjoys a day of unparalleled success. The new fly is simply outstanding and is taken with confidence by almost every rising trout. As the angler later described, "Every good presentation was taken. A fish ate it. In fact, I caught one fish twice."

The angler of this true story was John Barr, and the flies he tied that evening are now known as "Barr Emergers". The molt through which mayflies transition from juvenile nymphs to winged adults at a stream surface is lengthy and dynamic. Trout feed heavily on the transitional stages because the insects are exposed and vulnerable. When a hatch is heavy, fish can become exceedingly selective. They will key in on one specific stage of the process and avoid others. This is especially true of heavily fished trout. Such selectivity is one reason why you'll find so many different emerger patterns in fly shop bins. Emerger imitations include those intended to be fished below (but close to) the surface, those that ride partially below and partially above the surface, and those that float low on top or awash in the surface film. Carrying a variety of emerger patterns is helpful, because one of the challenges and joys of fishing a mayfly hatch is deciphering the stage(s) of emergence on which trout feed.

John Barr is one of the most respected fly tyers of our time. He is a humble and remarkably creative tyer with a stellar reputation for designing innovative and effective flies. Rather than modify existing ideas and designs, Barr starts anew and crafts simple but effective flies that solve many of fly fishing's persistent challenges. His flies often become personal favorites of knowledgeable experts, including fishing guides, shop owners, and fellow celebrated fly designers. Barr's most famous flies are the Copper John and Barr Emerger, but his Graphic Caddis, Vis-a-Dun, Slump Buster, and Meat Whistle are also highly regarded and have many devoted followers.

© Rusty Dunn, 2024

----- Barr Emerger (PMD) -----

Barr tied both dry and wet versions of his Emerger, which differ by stiffness of the hackle. Color of the tail and abdomen should match that of the nymph; color of the thorax and legs match that of the adult. Barr Emergers tied in BWO sizes and colors are very effective, as are flashback versions of the wet Emerger.

Hook: TMC2488 (2X-short, 3X-wide, ring-eye, curved), #14 - #18

Thread: 8/0 Uni, light cahill

Tail: Ginger-brown strung-hackle barbs

Abdomen: Ginger-brown Super Fine dubbing

Thorax Pale yellow Super Fine dubbing

Wing Case: Pale dun or pale olive hackle barbs

Legs: Pale dun or pale olive hackle barbs, trimmed slightly longer than wing case



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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