

Newscasts



April 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. We'll be returning to the East Side Club on the shores of Lake Monona with hopefully stunning weather this year. Tickets are limited – secure your spot today!

3rd Annual

SPRING FAIR FUNDRAISER

Sat April 20 2pm - 7pm
The East Side Club
Madison, Wisconsin
Visit swtu.org/springfundraiser for tickets!

SWTU SILENT AUCTION
TOM WENDELBURG BASS POPPER FLIES (10/BOX)

[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 meeting on 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>

DARE to Make a Difference at our April 9 Chapter meeting

Peter Jonas, the newest member of TU DARE's staff, will speak at our Tuesday, April 9, meeting to let us know what DARE is up to and how we can help.

DARE stands for **Driftless Area Restoration Effort** – a vital initiative we can all get behind!

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. Peter recently hosted a conversation on stream restoration in Buffalo



County, which [you can view here on YouTube](#). TU DARE also hosted a two-day virtual symposium and you can [select from a playlist of trouty topics](#).

Please join us at Schwoegler's on Grand Canyon Drive on Madison's West Side on Tuesday, April 9. Dinner and drinks available at 5:30 with Peter's presentation starting about 7 p.m.

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

Board Elections at the May Meeting

First and foremost, thank you to **Tom Thrall**, **Jim Beecher**, and **Kevin Maes** for their excellent and generous service on SWTU's Board.

All the current officers are eligible to continue to serve and have graciously agreed to do so. Whew! and thanks. Steve Musser, Henry Nehls Lowe and Topf Wells will be on the ballot.

John Freborg is also eligible for re-election and he, too, will be on the ballot with our most sincere thanks. Ben Mechelke will run for the Board to fill one of the three open seats. (See Ben's bio below.)

We probably will not have nominees for the two remaining seats for the April meeting. That meeting is already a full one and this month is probably our busiest with the Fundraiser and several work days.

We'll run the elections at the May meeting with a full slate of candidates. **To that end, please contact Topf Wells or Don Golembiewski if you are interested in serving on the Board.**

Thanks,

Topf Wells and Don Golembiewski

My name is Ben Mechelke and I joined the Southern WI TU chapter last fall after hearing about the great work the chapter does from a neighbor. I started trout fishing in the spring of 2023 and was blown away by scenic beauty of the cold water fisheries of southern WI. Chasing trout has quickly become a new passion of mine and connecting with like-minded individuals involved in the chapter and on the stream has brought me into a new community that I'm forever grateful for. I'm really looking forward to helping the chapter further by serving on the board and can't wait to see the great work ahead of us this year.

A little more about myself, I grew up visiting my grandparents on Long Lake in northwestern Wisconsin near Spooner. I learned to love the outdoors from those experiences and have been fortunate to be able to explore many corners of the country. Besides fishing, I enjoy hiking, trap/skeet shooting, rock climbing, fly tying and learning about the natural environment. My career so far has been in the aerospace and automotive industries working as a mechanical design engineer. My Fiancé and I have been living on the far west side of Madison for a couple years now. In the warmer months, you can find me on Black Earth Creek in the evenings enjoying a BWO hatch. See you on the stream.

Help plant trees at our first Workday of 2024

By Jim Hess, Conservation Chair

Join us **Saturday, April 6 – Kittleson Valley Creek, HR Growing Acres**. Details below, and we hope to see you there.

Time: 9am to 12 noon.

Where: Kittleson Valley Creek along Dane County Rd H, at the bridge on Kittleson Road. We will be working downstream of this bridge.

From Madison there are several routes you can take. Here are a couple:

- Take Hwy 69 south from Verona to Paoli, turn right onto County Rd PB, go 2 miles to Cty Rd A, turn right on A and go 14 miles to Cty Rd H, turn left on H and go about 3 miles to Kittleson Road, turn south on Kittleson Rd and go to the bridge.

- Take Hwy 151 west to Hwy 78 (west side of Mt. Horeb), exit Hwy 151 and take Hwy 78 south for 18 miles (going through Daleyville) to Cty Rd H, turn left on H and go 1 mile to Kittleson Rd. If you need directions, call Jim Hess (608-288-8662).

Here is the Google Map link for this location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/GpPsW33inh9H9sMu8>

What: Planting 30 oaks along the stream. The county will be pre-drilling the holes this week, if they can get machinery into the area. Pretty sure it will get done. If not, we will be hand digging the holes. We are planting bare root trees, requiring smaller holes. The weather forecast looks great for a workday.

After planting the 30 trees at this location, we will be replacing 10 dead trees downstream of this easement and 10 dead trees on German Valley Branch. There are dead trees on both sides of German Valley Branch, requiring rubber boots or waders to cross. This workday may go longer than normal, hopefully not.

Bring: Shovels!!! Also work gloves, sturdy shoes, and eye protection. Also bring reusable water bottles that can be re-filled from our 5-gal water jug. Waders to cross German Valley Branch.

Parking: Park on Kittleson Rd on the west side. This is a fairly busy county road with heavy farm machinery, so it is important for everyone to park on the same side of the road for traffic flow and safety.

Next Workdays:

April 13 – Kittleson – removing willows on the Hefty Farms Easement. This is the same location as the tree planting and where we worked at last fall

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 just 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.

May 18 - Big Spring – joint workday with the 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 upstream 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

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](#).



Whirling Disease Parasite Discovered in Wisconsin

[Please, please read this DNR press release](#). The whirling disease parasite has been found in Langlade County. This parasite does not always cause the disease but the DNR needs us to report any trout – in this part of the state, brook trout demand our careful attention – with symptoms of the disease. We also need to be more careful than ever about cleaning and disinfecting trout fishing gear. Let's hope the parasite is not widespread in WI but take every precaution to detect it and prevent its spread.

Perfect Timing for Prairie Seeding

By Topf Wells

Jim Hess, Justin Haglund, and some SWTU and Nohr volunteers made life better for brown trout and bumble bees a few weeks ago. Justin worked with a landowner to convert 3 or so acres of row crops along Conley Lewis creek on a DNR easement from row crops to a buffer. This change has multiple benefits: less runoff to the stream, less pesticides in the stream, less erosion, and more bugs along the stream.

You'll see this area for yourself on our April 27 work day with the Nohr Chapter on this site. Besides brushing, we'll sow native grass seeds for the buffer. The buffer also needed some



native wildflower seeds to function better and to add some beauty to the countryside. But wildflower seeds are demanding. They have to be sown so that they are subject to freezing, snow and rain to germinate.

With the help of some good friends, SWTU swung into action. The Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance (formerly Madison Audubon) provided lots of seeds of 20 different species, mixed with sawdust and ready to spread, at bargain costs. Nohr helped pay for them.

On March 8, SWTU and Nohr volunteers sowed the seed. At that point we were in a hot, dry spell and could only hope that we had the seeds out in time. Since then, we've had some very cold temps, snow, and rain. Those might have spoiled some fishing trips but our wild flowers are off to a great start.

The grass seeds do not depend on that cycle of weather to germinate so our April 27 sowing will be just fine. Huge thanks to Jim, Justin, SWBA, and the our band of volunteers. Photos courtesy Dyan Lesnik; [see more on swtu.org](https://www.swtu.org).



Riversmith Casting Clinic: 2024

Each spring, we hold our Riversmith Fly Casting Clinic (named after Jeff Smith, who was the driving force behind it for many years). The clinic is free and available to anyone interested in learning how to cast a fly. Beginners are especially encouraged to attend. Loaner rods will be available for those who do not own their own equipment.

Saturday, May 4, from 9 to Noon at H.M. Zander Community Nature Park in Cross Plains

In conjunction with Cross Plains "Trout Days", this FREE fly casting clinic is open to anyone ages 6 and up! Beginners are especially encouraged to attend. Equipment will be provided for those who don't have a fly rod. Learn about equipment, how to cast a fly rod, how to read the water, what trout eat (aquatic etymology) and any other questions you might have!



Please join us and also pass the word along to anyone you know who is interested in learning about our sport. You can show up to learn or help teach or provide encouragement. It's part of the larger "Trout Days" event so lots going on.

Attend and invite others wanting to learn

You can learn about fly-fishing equipment and casting, aquatic entomology and reading the water to find trout. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone 6 years of age and older to get involved in our sport. These 2-3 hours would cost a bundle from a private guide! Let any friend, relative or neighbor know about this valuable once a year event.

You can help! The more experienced casters and fishers we have on hand, the more we can provide individual assistance to attendees. Bring a friend who could use a lesson, and stick around to help.

Vets on the Fly – BBQ & Fly Fishing

By Dyan Lesnik

Vets on the Fly, in partnership with Team RWB (Red White and Blue), Courage Foundation and the Vet Center are having a BBQ and fly fishing event at Lake Wingra (main pavilion) on Monday, May 13, 5-8 p.m. It's free for all Vets and their family members. All equipment is provided so just show up for delicious BBQ, socializing and some great fly fishing.

[Learn more at their Facebook page.](#)

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.)

Better Stream Banks for Us and the Streams

By Topf Wells

The SWTU Board recently donated \$10,000 of the dollars we raise with your help to improve habitat and fishing.

Healthy streams need healthy stream banks. A proliferation of box elders and invasive plants like honeysuckle and buckthorn can create unstable stream banks, increase erosion and sedimentation, and choke out natives that are better for the banks and the trout living in the stream. They can also make access to and fishing the stream tortuous.

SWTU addresses these problems with many of our work days but our streams need more help. For several years TUDARE and the DNR have fielded a winter brushing crew to clear many DNR easements on nearby trout streams and to inspect those easements for any other problems. TU Chapters provide much of the funding.

The DNR's recent report on the work of the crew this winter is [available here for your reading pleasure](#).

The SWTU Board continued our support of this excellent program by donating \$4,000 to next season's crew.

Great workers also need great tools. The DNR's brush mower had just died. Some good DNR shopping found a great new mower and chipper available for about \$6,000. The Board has donated that amount. Assuming that the dreaded supply chain problems don't arise, you'll see the equipment in action at our work days on Big Spring and Conley Lewis.

The DNR and TUDARE are very grateful for SWTU's support. The Board is very grateful for your support of SWTU. You are essential to the funds we provide for stream conservation and angling access.

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!

A Big Trout Question on the Conservation Congress Hearing

Please [use this link](#) to learn how to participate in the 2024 Conservation Congress hearing and to review the questions up for consideration.

One question would open the harvest season for inland trout from the first Saturday in May to the first Saturday in April.

The stated reason is to increase the harvest opportunities for trout. The SWTU Board has not taken a position on this proposal. However, the recent edition of Wisconsin Trout has a thoughtful article on it. I think it's fair to say that the article voices some skepticism about the idea. Some concerns are the lack of public discussion of this idea and of the scientific data and reasoning that supports it.

A more localized question might well earn our support. A question proposes more protection for the brook trout of 6 Mile Creek on stretches of the stream restored by the Nohr Chapter.

Welcome New Members

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

Leon Moore
Brad Coleman
Tony Patton
Steve Galarneau

James Brown
Steve Sundet
Dean Boes

Brylan Weisensel
Diane Baker
Peter Schmeling

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

Historians trace the cultural beginnings of recreational fly fishing and the ethics of "the gentle sport" to Isaak Walton's 1653 masterpiece *The Compleat Angler*. Indeed, the pleasant and convivial sport that we enjoy today descends from Walton. Early fly fishers in America adopted not only Walton's angling spirit, but also centuries of British methods, flies, and techniques. The angling literature of Great Britain is rich and deep, but American fly fishers developed an independent identity and their own literature beginning in the late 1800s. The main architect of that break from British traditions was Thaddeus Norris. He was to American fly fishing what Thomas Jefferson was to American governance. Each authored a landmark Declaration of Independence. Norris' book, *The American Angler's Book* (1864), established uniquely American methods, flies, and fishing strategies.

Thaddeus Norris (1811-1877) was a Philadelphia tackle maker, businessman, and merchant. He is often called the "father of American fly fishing" because of his influence on angling this side of the pond. His 602 page book is encyclopedic in scope. It gives instructions on all aspects of fishing tackle and angling methods, but it emphasized fly fishing for trout and salmon. Many of Norris' fly patterns were those of the British literature, but he matched those flies to specific American insects and instructed anglers on how to present them in American waters, which are generally more turbulent than those of Great Britain. Norris admonished readers not to slavishly follow British methods and tactics, but rather to adapt them to insects, fish species, and river conditions found here. *The American Angler's Book* contained extensive instruction on how to tie flies. It was the first America book to do so, and even the great

Theodore Gordon learned fly tying from Norris' book. *The American Angler's Book* contains the first known reference to dry-fly fishing in America. Norris described how to crack the line with false casts and whip moisture from a fly such that it floats. As he wrote, "*the great desideratum would be, to keep the line wet and the flies dry.*" Norris was a talented rodmaker whose split-bamboo rods were highly prized for their quality of construction. His flies and rods were simply the best available at the time. Norris profoundly changed the nature of American sport fishing and he, arguably, had more influence than any single American author since.

Thaddeus Norris was America's first fly-fishing celebrity and media personality. He was an amiable and charming fellow who, in addition to publishing a blockbuster book, authored many articles in sporting magazines. Media exposure plus Norris' natural charisma made him a beloved angling luminary. Fly anglers affectionately called him "Uncle Thad", for he seemed like everyone's kind and favorite uncle. Author Fred Mather described Norris in 1901 as "*filled to overflowing with humor, Uncle Thad was as charming a man as one could wish.*" No wonder Norris is often referred to as "the American Walton".

Norris was a presentationist, not an imitationist. He believed that only a modest number of fly patterns is needed anywhere. One of his favorite flies was the Grouse Hackle, a British wingless wet fly dressed many different ways in the literature. The Grouse Hackle first appeared by name in Samuel Taylor's *Angling in All Its Branches* (1800). Norris' adaptation of the Grouse Hackle is most similar to the pattern of T.C. Hofland in *The British Angler's Manual* (1841). British versions are hackled with Scottish red grouse feathers, but Norris substituted American "prairie fowl". He did not identify the species, but Hungarian partridge and sage, sharp-tailed, dusky, or ruffed grouse work admirably.

© Rusty Dunn, 2024

----- Grouse Hackle -----

Hook: Wet fly / nymph hook, #10 - #18

Thread: Not stated by Norris, but contemporary British wingless wets were often tied of deep orange silk

Tag: Flat gold tinsel

Body: Peacock herl (preferred by Norris) or orange floss

Hackle: A wing marginal covert feather of a "prairie fowl"; substitute with Hungarian partridge, sharp-tailed grouse, sage grouse, dusky grouse (used here), or ruffed grouse



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	Open
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

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

