

# Newscasts

Summer 2025 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## *Fishy Summer Fun!*

By Topf Wells

### **Are Trout in Black Earth Creek?**

Of course they are, although sometimes I wonder with my lack of success. See for yourself on **Tuesday, July 29, at about 2 PM at Zander Park in Cross Plains** (the site of our casting clinic). Kyle Olivencia and his crew will survey the stream then and there. Surveys are dependent on weather and other variable so stay tuned for confirming emails closer to that day. Huge thanks to Kyle for allowing us to see the DNR, trout and Black Earth Creek in action.



### **A Potential Picnic**

Following the survey, we hope to hold a picnic when folks can join us after their workday. We could really use some volunteers. If we're able to have the picnic, we'll notify members via an email blast. Contact Topf Wells at [topfwells@gmail.com](mailto:topfwells@gmail.com) if you can help.

## **Meicher Madness Auction again set for September 9 Membership Meeting**

Last year saw the return of the Meicher Madness Auction – one of SWTU's most fun and profitable events that got held up by COVID for a few years. After raising more than \$4,000 last year, we're doing it again this September and hope to see you at Schwoegler's Lanes for it!

Larry Meicher was a founding member of SWTU and a tremendous force for good in our Chapter and at State Council. Larry did everything for us, serving as an officer and board member, a fly tying instructor, a participant at work days, and always as a passionate conservationist. One of his many contributions to SWTU was the creation of the March Madness Auction. At his passing we named the event Meicher Madness in his honor.



The madness and fun will continue on September 9. Everyone will have chances at some cool and highly usable gear, and the proceeds will support all the Chapter activities.

### **Here are some needs and reminders about our renewed and refreshed auction:**

**Help.** We need about a dozen folks to help at the auction itself: cashiers, folks to check in all the bidders, organizers of all the gear, and runners to make sure the bidders get the stuff they win. Contact Topf Wells at [topfwells@gmail.com](mailto:topfwells@gmail.com) if you can help.

**No Junk.** Traditionally members have brought in just about any gear they no longer had a use for. Along with great stuff, we must have received a hundred leaky waders and other equipment that had aged into oblivion.

That was sometimes fun but we now have had a mountain of really good gear donated to the Chapter. Much of it from the families of deceased members or those who cannot fish anymore. This auction will be focused on selling those excellent rods, reels and other gear. We just won't have the time anymore to deal with junk.

**Buyers.** With all this gear, we need buyers who want or need fishing stuff. Lots of you might be like me. At last count, I have 10 fly rods, 3 working fly reels, and 6 spinning outfits. I'll buy something at the auction but not sure what that might be. For those of our 800 members and friends who might be new to fishing, trout fishing or still gearing up, this auction is a golden opportunity to get some top notch fishing stuff at extremely reasonable prices. This will be a great meeting to invite a new member of the Chapter or a new angler.

**Special Request.** Trips and flies tied by our skilled fly tying members were the best sellers at

all the previous auctions. Those fly tyers have been supplying flies for great causes and we have not offered any trips for over a year. But any trip or flies would be a most welcome addition to this year's auction.

We'll have more details in our September Newsletter. Please mark your calendar and think how you could help make the revival of a fun event successful.

– Topf Wells and Dyan Lesnik (SWTU President and Vice President)

## 2025 Chapter Election Results Votes at the May meeting

Many thanks to those who stepped up, those who have served and those who voted at the May meeting. Here is our updated list of officers and board members:

President: Topf Wells  
Vice President: Dyan Lesnik  
Secretary: Josh Reilly  
Treasurer: Michael Westbury  
Board Member: Don Golembiewski  
Board Member: Gabe Park  
Board Member: John Freeborg  
Board Member: Henry Haugley (one-year term)  
Board Member: Mark Maffit (one-year term)  
Board Member: Ray Venn  
State Council Rep: Michael Williamson (incumbent)

We again thank Steve Musser (President), Marty Chiaro (Treasurer), Henry Nehls-Lowe (Secretary), Riley Bellin (Board Member) and Jim Beecher (Board Member) for their service.

## 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.) Some recent activity:

**A letter TO our DNR:** Good news on Mt. Vernon Creek. The DNR is in final stages of approving a purchase of 400 ft. of the creek near Mt. Vernon. Check out [the letter SWTU sent to the DNR Board in support of the purchase](#).

**A thanks FROM our DNR:** The chapter recently [received a letter and "Friends to Fisheries" certificate from the DNR](#) expressing their appreciation of the \$4,000 donation for Fisheries South district summer interns that the Board approved in February.

## PGT Celebrates Another Successful Year

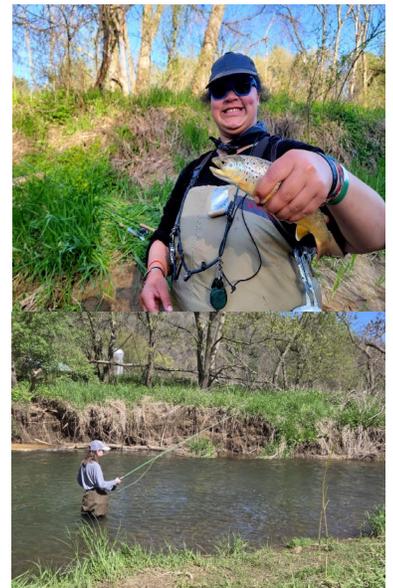
We received the following note about Project Green Teen (PGT) and some inspiring photos ... be sure to [click through to the website to see all the pictures!](#)

Hey all!

I just wanted to thank you all for the continued support of PGT. We had another great year and introduced another crew of young people to the amazing humans and spaces associated with fly fishing.

I appreciate you all!

Brian Counselman  
Malcolm Shabazz City High School  
Science Teacher & Project Based Learning Coordinator



## The Work Was Hard But Satisfying

By Topf Wells

About 15 of SWTU's finest gathered at Dane County's Duerst property on the Sugar River as the first stage in a restoration of part of that river.

We were stage 1. Our job was to remove honeysuckle (and the buckthorn that John Freborg discovered-- ouch) from an old berm along the river. Stage 2 will have the Stihl professional sawyers remove the box elders from the berm. Thanks to Sara Strassman of TUDARE, Jim Hess, and James Brodzeller of Dane County for enabling us to win the services of this volunteer crew. The third stage will be the County's removal of the berm. That's the key and most important step of the restoration because that reconnects the river to its floodplain and springs. Stage 3 cannot happen without Stages 1 and 2.

If invasive honeysuckle has enough years it grows into impenetrable thickets, impossible for a person to walk through. This stuff was old age, old growth honeysuckle. No way sawyers could work in its midst. It also completely shades almost all the ground. There's just bare, highly erodible soil underneath the honeysuckle.

For about 3 hours, we sawed and hauled and have cleared about 2/3 of the berm. That might not sound like much but it's a colossal and hard earned achievement. We might need one more work day in the fall to prepare for Stihl but we're past the worst. *(ed. note. Wow, the photos really tell the story! From impenetrable wall to pleasant walking path.)*

We had a good time. Jim and James had the work well planned and we had plenty of cold water, brownies, pork sticks, and, bless Dyan's heart, homemade plain and chocolate shortbread. There's always a chance to visit with one another and some excellent fishing spots were shared amongst the comrades in arms.

Virginia waterleaf, a wonderful native flower, somehow managed to persist in a few spots. With the honeysuckle gone, it will spread. It's lovely, the roots help stop erosion, and it's a great plant for some native bee species, including a specialist, the waterleaf cuckoo bee. I hope James can figure out a way to keep the waterleaf going once the berm is removed.

Everyone worked hard, cooperatively, and safely. Special mention I think is due John Freborg, who disappeared into a honeysuckle thicket. We worried that he might have fallen prey to a mutant, carnivorous honeysuckle. But he emerged triumphant from the remains of the honeysuckle and buckthorn.

Lots of regulars showed. We were happy to welcome Amy Klusmeier, a great former SWTU president, who is back in Madison full time. Jim and Bonnie Lawton took time from their care of their stretch of Tagatz Creek to show a little love to the Sugar.

Most heartfelt thanks to Jim Hess for another excellent set of spring workdays. He faced lots of weather and scheduling issues but enabled us to conserve streams in different ways in different places and learn a lot and have some fun while doing so. We all hope Jim takes a couple of months off. I don't know that he ever really stops. He told us he had fall workdays set already. Jim, thanks and we look forward to them.

[See more photos from Jim Hess and Dyan Lesnik in [the story on swtu.org](http://the-story-on-swtu.org).]

## Stream Assessment Points the Way to Wild Trout

Topf Wells

The next time you venture to Vernon County to fish for trout, turn right and head for LaCrosse County, specifically the Lower LaCrosse River and Halfway Creek watersheds. Kirk Olson just published his assessments of the streams in those watersheds. Some of the streams are full of brown trout, some full of brookies but all of them are filled with one or the other. The trout are all wild. A few of the brook streams have, as far as Kirk's historical research can show, always held wild brook trout. A real rarity. Don't fish Muddlers ... none of the streams hold mottled sculpin. Kirk is so great; he is the Champion of Driftless sculpins. He's going to re-introduce them in some of those streams.

This report is a tour de force of the scientific knowledge this generation of DNR fish biologists bring to their work. I'm humbled by the expertise and really grateful for it. To find it, [go here and select LaCrosse County](#).



## They Had Fun!

Last month, we shared about the [Earth Day tree planting with 4<sup>th</sup> grade students](#) ... and have since heard that several tagged the event as their favorite of the whole school year!



## Vets on the Fly Activities

By Dyan Lesnik

Vets on the Fly activities are free for all Vets and their family members. All equipment is provided so just show up for their events for socialization and fishing fun. [Learn more at their Facebook page.](#)

## Cast Your Support for Local Fly Caster Heading to World Championships

Local fly casting instructor Kalyn Hoggard has been selected to represent our country on the U.S. Fly Casting Team at the 2026 World Fly Casting Championships in Italy. To help Kalyn cover the costs of international travel, equipment and competition entry, Lineworkers Fly Fishers is hosting two fundraising events at the Deer Creek Sports and Conservation Club. All are welcome — casters, tiers and supporters alike. Details below and [learn more here on swtu.org](#).

**Level Up Night: Double Haul** | Wednesday, July 16 | 5:30–7:30 PM [[facebook event page](#)]

A hands-on evening focused on fly casting, featuring double haul practice, casting games, and skill-building drills in a relaxed setting. Suggested donation: \$25

**Level Up Night: Fly Tying Fest** | Monday, August 5 | 5:30–7:30 PM [[facebook event page](#)]

A lively fly tying night with demonstrations, a material and fly swap, and raffle drawings. \$25 donation includes:

- ✓ One ticket for the Grand Prize Drawing
- ✓ Ten Bucket Raffle Tickets
- ✓ Access to the Fly Tying & Swap Tables

## Welcome New Members

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

Kadin Sullivan  
Tim Brown  
Bob Schroyer  
Cynthia Finesilver  
Timothy Tealey

Tim Miller  
Calvin Callahan  
Jim Hamilton  
Rodney Hardy  
Robert Carnine

Tim Roets  
Karen Herling  
Fred Panke  
Richard Kersten  
Paul Holzem

Dan Stieber  
Tiaira Beall  
D Ryan  
Ken Wahlin

We are honored to have you among us. Please join our next meeting 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.

## Fountains of Youth

*Classic trout flies that have withstood the test of time ... flies that remain "forever young"*

by Rusty Dunn

Spring creeks are the crown jewels of fly fishing. The common feature of all spring creeks is that the bulk of their flows originates from natural springs or artesian aquifers. Dissolved minerals, slight alkalinity, stable flows, and consistently cold temperatures promote year-round growth of aquatic plants, insects, and crustaceans. The food base and, hence, trout biomass of spring creeks are very high compared to equivalently sized freestone streams, whose flows originate primarily from melting snow and/or precipitation runoff. Examples of world-class spring creeks include Silver Creek and the Henry's Fork in Idaho, Armstrong and DePuy Spring Creeks in Montana, Penns Creek, Spring Creek, and Letort Spring Run in Pennsylvania, and the fabled chalk streams of southern England (River Test, River Itchen, River Avon, etc.).

Tailwater fisheries are similar to spring creeks in many ways, but usually on a much grander scale. Tailwaters are river flows just downstream of dams built for water management and/or hydroelectric power generation. The column of water in such reservoirs (often hundreds of feet deep) stratifies into relatively stable zones of varying temperatures and dissolved nutrients. Most dams release their water from deep outlets, thereby providing consistent downstream flows of cold nutrient-rich water. Examples of world-class tailwater fisheries include New Mexico's San Juan River below Navajo Dam, Montana's Bighorn River below Yellowtail Dam, Missouri's White River below Bull Shoals Dam, Utah's Green River below Flaming Gorge Dam, and Colorado's South Platte River below each of a series of seven dams. Tailwaters can hold thousands or even tens of thousands of trout per mile.

Many of the country's most famous trout fisheries are spring creeks or tailwaters. Their crystal clear waters, glassy smooth flows, heavy weed growth, prolific but shockingly tiny insects, and highly selective trout make such waters challenging for most fly anglers but immensely rewarding for an experienced few. Spring

creeks and tailwaters are fisheries that make anglers famous, and vice versa. They are the major leagues of fly angling. The laboratories where patterns and methods to fool even the pickiest of trout are developed. The crucibles that identify truly outstanding trout flies.

The RS2 is one such fly. It was created for Colorado's South Platte River by Rim Chung, a modest and humble Korean who fled with his family from North to South Korea in the 1950s during the Korean War and immigrated to Denver, CO in 1968 at age 34. Chung had fished most of his life, but he knew little about fly fishing or trout when arriving in Colorado. He began fishing with spinning gear, but fortuitous friendships and mentors steered him toward fly fishing and tying. He was a quick study and developed his now-legendary RS2 pattern in the early 1970s. Chung primarily fished the South Platte River, where he studied its local insects and behaviors of its famously large and selective trout during hatches. He then designed simple but effective flies to match the hatches. Chung's first design, the RS1, was a more-or-less standard nymphal imitation, but his second design, the RS2, proved to be a remarkably effective imitation of emerging midges and small mayflies. The "RS" of RS2 stands for "Rim's Semblance", because his fly-tying goals were always to suggest but not closely replicate the appearance of natural insects. The silhouette of the RS2 is thin, delicate, and sparse, just like the South Platte naturals. The RS2 is tied of soft feathery materials that quiver when wet and suggest lifelike movements.

The key element that distinguished Chung's RS2 from earlier South Platte flies is a small tuft of soft, fuzzy, feather barbs to imitate adult wings just as they begin to sprout from the molting nymphal (or pupal in the case of midges) body. Thus, the RS2 is an early-stage mayfly and midge emerger, one that is exceedingly effective. Fish it awash in the surface film if trout feed atop the surface, or a few inches underneath if bulging trout feed on nymphs or pupae just below the surface. The RS2 is an excellent dropper when trailed behind and beneath an indicator dry fly. Small jerky movements of the RS2 imparted by the angler can excite to a frenzy even the most cautious of trout and most subdued of angler.

© Rusty Dunn, 2025

### ----- Rim Chung's RS2 -----

Rim Chung's favorite RS2 colors are shades of black, gray, olive, tan, and yellow to match natural insects.

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**Hook:** Dry fly, straight eye, #14 - #24

**Thread:** 8/0-14/0, color to match naturals

**Tail:** Two medium or dark dun microfibetts, split, length ~1x to 1.5x the hook shank

**Abdomen:** Natural or dyed beaver dubbing

**Thorax:** Natural or dyed beaver dubbing

**Wing:** A clump of dun or gray, downy, fluffy, feather barbs taken from the base of a hen saddle feather, trimmed to a small stub. (Many tyers use CDC puffs instead.)

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## 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](mailto:madkasel@gmail.com)**

### Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited Leadership:

President	Topf Wells
Vice President	Dyan Lesnik
Secretary	Joshua Reilly
Treasurer	Michael Westbury
State Council Rep.	Michael Williamson
Board Member	John Freeborg
Board Member	Don Golembiewski
Board Member	Henry Haugley
Board Member	Mark Maffit
Board Member	Gabe Park
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Past President	Steve Musser
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Conservation Committee Chair	Jim Hess
Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair	Tina Murray
Youth Education Chair for SWTU	Tina Murray

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