

Newscasts

September 2025 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Meicher Madness Auction at the 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 on Tuesday, September 9, and hope to see you at Schwoegler's Lanes for it!

The auction starts at 7PM, but **please show up to Schwoegler's early** to hand in any donated items and to peruse the auction offerings.

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 a chance at cool and highly usable gear, and the proceeds will support Chapter activities. As a teaser ... one auction item will be a **two-night state in the Green Cabin (pictured) at the West Fork Fishing Club** (generously donated by that organization). [Check out this flier](#) to learn more about this fantastic opportunity!



Here are some auction needs and reminders:

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 if you can help.

Useful Auction Items. 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 items that had aged into oblivion.

Our last auction put much of the good gear in our chapter storeroom in the hands of the lucky and generous attendees. **We can definitely use some of the good stuff in your personal storeroom.** As you look at your piles of gear, you might think: 1. *What am I not using?* and 2. *What might a beginning angler need or want?* Just make sure it's usable. Thanks!

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 hope to see you on **Tuesday, September 9 at 7PM** ... or hopefully a little earlier! Please mark your calendar and think how you could help make this a fun and successful event.

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

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

DeForest Riverfest – Fun and learning along the Upper Yahara

Last year, we were excited to share news of trout in the Upper Yahara and our partnership to support DeForest's larger effort to protect, improve and provide better access to the Upper Yahara. The DNR surveyed the Upper Yahara again this summer. **Great news:** More wild brown trout including some that had just hatched this year, a sure sign of natural reproduction. Our partnership includes a planned workday (likely Oct. 25) and learning opportunities – which means we are excited to provide casting instruction and fishing tips at the **Yahara Riverfest on September 6 from noon to 4.**



It's a big afternoon event with food and many fun activities, including a kids fishing tournament from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at Sunfish Pond. [Learn more about Riverfest here.](#)

And if you can help out with the casting and fishing clinic (you don't have to be an expert!) for even an hour, please contact Topf Wells at topfwells@gmail.com.

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.)

Your Board has engaged with the Village of Cross Plains on a development with the potential to negatively impact Black Earth Creek. Board members have attended meetings and [approved issuing this letter to the Village](#).



Fishy Fun and Fantastic Food

Many turned out to watch our friends in the DNR survey Black Earth Creek and then we gathered later for an informal picnic. Young and old, we all had fun getting out on a lovely summer day.

We're hoping to put together more of these light, friendly chapter gatherings and hope you can make the next one!

Stream Team Workdays: Tentative Dates for Fall 2025

By Jim Hess

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for as many of these workdays as you can. The work is not complicated, the company pleasant and the difference notable. Except where noted, they are held on Saturdays and run from about 9 to noon. We will send emails closer to the date with full details.

Sept 13 – Garfoot Creek, Dane County, where it crosses County Rd KP between Cross Plains and Black Earth. Clearing small box elders, invasive woodies and two down pine trees just north of where Garfoot crosses County Road KP. People will park in the property owner's barnyard area located at 9050 County Rd KP. This is one of the earliest easements along Black Earth Creek and is needing our help

Sept 27 – Big Spring Branch, Iowa County (5465 Big Spring Rd.) This workday will be called the Carol Murphy Joint Nohr/SWTU Workday in honor of Carol Murphy, Nohr Chapter President. Carol passed away unexpectedly on August 14 and would have been at the workday with her big smile and healthy treats. We will be clearing willows and other invasive woodies. This will be a joint workday with the Nohr Chapter, assisting the DNR with removing willows and box elders along Big Spring Branch in Iowa County. We have had several workdays at this site and hopefully we can finish the job with a good turnout. Justin Haglund, DNR Fish Biologist, and Lloyd Meng, Fisheries Technician, will be directing and assisting us, along with some other DNR staff.

***Special Workday – Oct 15, Wednesday, 9:30 to 12:30 – Ley Creek (Iowa County)**. TUDARE is working with Cummins Emissions Solutions, Inc out of Mineral Point with this workday. Sara Strassman, TUDARE Director, has asked Nohr and SWTU if we could also lend a hand as well. Cummins will transport their employees to and from the worksite, so we should have a good number of volunteers. But while they can use hand tools, they are not allowed to use herbicides or chainsaws. That is where we come in, as well as working with the volunteers on building burn piles. Lloyd Meng, DNR Fisheries Technician, is coordinating the event and will be directing the volunteers.

Oct 25 – Upper Yahara River in DeForest, working with the Village of DeForest clearing honeysuckles and other invasive woodies. We will meet near the intersection of County Rd. CV and Innovation Drive. The work area is along the walking trail that follows the river, so the Village will provide vehicles to transport people and equipment to and from the area. More details to follow.

Nov 1 – Dane County Duerst Property on the Sugar River (7309 Riverside Rd), clearing honeysuckles and other woody invasives. This is the site that TUDARE has arranged for a team of STIHL professional sawyers to work clearing large box elders that are encroaching the river. This workday will continue clearing out the invasive understory so the STIHL crew can focus on the large box elders.

Nov 15 – Return to the Duerst Property and continue to clear the understory for the STIHL chainsaw team.

If you have any questions, please contact Conservation Committee Chair [Jim Hess](#).



Chainsaw Training Classes – Fall 2025

All sawyers at our Workdays need to at least complete Level 1 Chainsaw Training. It's a requirement for doing chainsaw work in **any** park and helps to ensure a vital level of expertise and safety. This fall, [Dane County is offering Level 1, 2 and 3 classes](#) ... these must be taken in sequence and sessions appear available at the time of publication. Note as well that there are specific sessions for women and gender minorities. If you have questions on this, please contact Jim Hess.

Remembering and Honoring Carol Murphy

With sadness we share [the passing of Carol Murphy](#), longtime leader (and force of nature) with the Nohr TU Chapter, which is to the west of us. Below is a Board action and correspondence related to this remarkable conservationist.



To the Officers and Board of the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited,

Last night the Board of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited (SWTU) voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 in honor and memory of Carol Murphy.

Many of us in SWTU cherished Carol as a wonderful and productive leader of Trout Unlimited at the chapter, regional, and state levels. Nohr has always been a strong chapter but Carol led you to new heights of achievement and fellowship. But for all her TU and other accomplishments, we mourn her loss even more because she was such a wonderful person. She was smart, gracious, kind, fun – an unending source of positive energy. One reason we looked forward to our joint workdays with Nohr was the chance to hang out with Carol

Our most sincere condolences to all of you.

Please use this donation however you see fit to honor Carol.

These are tough times for all of you. Please let us know if SWTU can help in any way during this most difficult transition.

*Topf Wells, President
SWTU*

Topf and all of SWTU,

Thank you very much, Carol was very special to all of us in the Nohr chapter. It maybe shouldn't come as much of a surprise how much she meant to others but it is very touching to hear of all the other people she has had an impact on.

We appreciate your generosity and we will use it to memorialize Carol with as much grace and kindness that she showed to all of us!

*Thank you
Kyle Richards, president
Nohr TU*

DNR Brushing Crew Makes a Difference ...

... and so do your donations because SWTU helped fund the crew!

By Topf Wells

Lloyd Meng's [newly issued report on the DNR Brushing Crew](#) in the fall, winter and spring of '24-'25 awaits you. The report is an excellent, well written and detailed summary of the brushing crew's excellent work. The statistics, narrative and photos speak for themselves. I hope we, and all our TU members, agree that our funding of the crew is an excellent investment. Lloyd requested an additional \$5,000 from the TU chapters who have supported the crew in order to increase the brushing in the upcoming fall/winter/spring season. SWTU has donated an additional \$1,500 and other chapters are now considering chipping in. SWTU is also grateful that the crew will work on Mt. Vernon Creek this season.

DNR Watershed Report Names New Trout Water

By Topf Wells

Thanks to Nate Nye for an absolutely [superb new survey and assessment of the Bear Creek watershed in Sauk and Richland Counties](#). Probably the key specific finding is that the Class 1, improved section of Bear Creek, especially the upper 2/3 of that stretch, offers excellent fishing. Along with thanking Nate for that restoration, we also owe enduring gratitude to the Aldo Leopold Chapter. This four mile stretch of Trout Heaven is one of that Chapter's greatest achievements. (And we note some need for tree planting in some stretches ... a possible workday in the future?)

There is much info in this report ... including a new brook trout stream: Pumpkin Hollow Creek. Isn't that a cool name for a stream? It does cross a highway and the lower end is on public property. Nate cautions, though, that it's small and doesn't hold many trout. But it's not closely connected to any other brook trout stream in the Bear system and possibly has not been stocked. Very rarely surveyed. Those brook trout might be a remnant population of some wild brookies of the Driftless Area, which is also totally cool.

Thanks, Nate, for a great report on a great resource!

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.](#)

Welcome New Members

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

Rod McKenzie
James Fromm
Lincoln Anderson
Robert Graebner

Chris O'Hearn
Zachary Nichols
Zach Heredia

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 [Dyan Lesnik](#) 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

Ojibwe natives called the river *Wiisaakode-ziibi* ("river through half-burnt woods") due to the many forest fires that scarred its valley. The Ojibwe traveled in birch bark canoes, carrying furs and other goods upstream from Lake Superior, across headwater bogs, and down the St. Croix River to the Mississippi basin. French fur traders translated *Wiisaakode-ziibi* as *Bois Brulé* ("burnt wood") *River*, which remains the name today. Most Wisconsinites, however, simply know it as "The Brule". When the great north woods beckon Wisconsin anglers, the Brule is often their destination.

The Brule once held 10 pound brook trout, but the ravages of 19th century logging forced such trout back to Lake Superior. The river slowly recovered, however, and by the 1920s became a haven for summer retreats of wealthy Midwesterners and power brokers of the Eastern establishment. Stately homes and luxury accommodations prospered among the Brule's isolation and unspoiled natural beauty. Well-heeled anglers, including at least five US presidents, fished its cold clear waters. In the words of Wisconsin author Gordon MacQuarrie, "*The Brule, edged with cedar and spruce, is your artist-fisherman conception of the way a trout stream ought to look.*"

The Brule is Wisconsin's most famous river and was home water of Sid Gordon, arguably Wisconsin's most famous fly angler. Gordon (1885-1956) worked during the 1930s for the Wisconsin Conservation Department (predecessor of today's DNR) supervising lake and stream improvement in northern Wisconsin. He designed and built hundreds of stream improvement structures on the Brule. Gordon was a nationally known expert on water chemistry, water quality, aquatic vegetation, and how those factors affect insect and fish populations. He developed a remarkably accurate method for calculating a river's carrying capacity (pounds of fish per acre foot) solely from its chemical analysis.

After leaving the Conservation Department, Gordon was a prolific writer, both regionally for Wisconsin newspapers and nationally for high profile outdoor magazines.

His 1955 book *How to Fish from Top to Bottom* was the first to discuss fly fishing from the perspective of a professional biologist, stream ecologist, and entomologist. Gordon was a tremendously successful angler, which derived from his knowing in detail the biology of insects and trout. Gordon's book is a practical, no-nonsense guide to fishing the water column, especially the unseen and, to many, mysterious world below the surface. If you've ever wanted to learn how to fish nymphs, Gordon's book is a good place to start. Gordon's angling insights were well ahead of his time and influenced many later authors. For example, Pennsylvania's legendary Charlie Fox described Gordon's book as the "*best book on fishing I've ever read*". Gary Lafontaine (of *Caddisflies* (1981) fame) credits Gordon as inspiring him to study the life cycle and behavior of caddisflies. Even today, *How to Fish from Top to Bottom*, often appears on lists of the greatest American fly angling books ever published.

Sid Gordon was the first to describe in angling publications the underwater egg-laying behavior of caddisfly females. He observed that egg-laden females of many caddis species swim or crawl underwater and deposit their eggs on rocks at the bottom. Such egg-laying females have sparkle and movement like no other insects, for they are highly mobile and enveloped in a bubble of light-reflecting air carried from the surface. The legs serve as oars and propel such egg-layers quickly through the water. These are not drowned, inert, or dead adults; they are very active and highly mobile. Such behavior had previously been described only in inaccessible scientific literature, but Gordon brought it to the attention of everyday anglers. Gordon showed that, in addition to nymphs, wet flies, and dry flies, a fourth type of imitation is needed to imitate sub-surface winged adults actively laying eggs.

Sid Gordon designed a remarkably effective fly to imitate underwater egg-laying caddis. His "Wet-Dry Fly" is "Wet" because the insect being imitated is underwater, but it is "Dry" because the insect itself is bone dry, being ensheathed in a sparkling bubble of air, which Gordon compared to "*a shining ball of quicksilver*". Gordon named his pattern the "Swanson Wet-Dry Fly" in honor of his good friend Seegar Swanson Sr., who persuaded Gordon to write "*How to Fish from Top to Bottom*" and served as its editor during publication.

© Rusty Dunn, 2025

----- Swanson Wet-Dry Fly -----

A body of reflective tinsel sparkles as the Wet-Dry Fly tumbles in the currents, thereby imitating egg-laying caddis encased in a bubble of air.

Hook: Heavy nymph hook, #4 - #10

Thread: Not specified, but black or dark gray work well

Body: A fat body of white mercerized floss, covered completely with 1/16" silver tinsel

Wings: Three sections of turkey tail feathers, pulled over the body with gaps showing in between

Legs: Tip ends of the turkey tail fibers gathered and tied as a beard



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	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
Board Member	Ray Venn
Past President	Steve Musser
Newscasts Editor	Drew Kasel
Conservation Committee Chair	Jim Hess
Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair	Tina Murray
Youth Education Chair for SWTU	Tina Murray

topfwells@gmail.com
dmlgriffin@gmail.com
jreilly.swtu@gmail.com
mwestbury.swtu@gmail.com
mlwilliamson.53@gmail.com
john-tu@freeborg.com
don.golembiewski@gmail.com
hhaugley@yahoo.com
mark.maffitt@gmail.com
gabe@muskyfool.com
raylindav@msn.com
stevemusser@msn.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

