

# Newscasts

March 2026 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## Meicher Madness Auction Returns to March Meeting Our only fundraiser of the year: Tuesday, March 10, 2026

The Meicher Madness Auction was SWTU's traditional start to the fishing season: an excuse to comb through the gear, donate stuff, buy the cool stuff for the new season, and hang out with old and friends. A fun evening and a boost to the SWTU checking account for the year's expenses. We're back to that schedule with all those goals in mind.

The auction occurs on Tuesday, March 10th, at Schwoegler's on Grand Canyon Drive. We hope to start the auction by 6:30. Sales are hurt if the auction sputters along after 9, hence, the earlier start and, we hope, a quicker pace. Think of arriving close to 5:30 for food and drinks. The room might be crowded. Let's not have your hamburger and beer spilled by someone jumping to bid for premium flies. We'll have the briefest business meeting possible.

### How to help the auction succeed:

- **Bid early, often, and high.**
- **Donate stuff you'd be tempted to buy.** If you tie flies, please think of donating. Flies created by SWTU folks with our local waters in mind are popular items. Even I catch fish on such flies.
- **Think of helping.** If you can arrive by 5, we'll need help displaying the prizes, and we can always use help spotting bids and running items to successful bidders. The auctioneer's eyes and ears are not improving with age.

Everyone is welcome but we really encourage folks new to trout fishing or tying to come. You'll find bargains that will make your new pursuits more fun and successful.

Thanks and see you at the Auction on March 10.

This monthly chapter gathering will start earlier at 6:30 pm, but join us anytime after 5:30 for ordering food, drinks and socializing – and for the auction it's always best to be on the earlier side to scout gear, etc.. As always, the meeting will be held at Schwoegler's Lanes.

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

## Looking Ahead to Our April 2026 Gathering and Chapter Elections

**April 14. Jason Freund** will be our featured speaker of the year. He is an expert angler, tyer, historian and scientist. His blogs are fun, his skill and knowledge impressive, and he is one of Wisconsin TU's most dedicated leaders. Based in LaCrosse, on the faculty of UW-LaCrosse and the President of the Coulee Chapter, Jason knows a lot about the streams we fish and some we should be fishing.

**This is also our annual meeting with chapter elections and we have two vacancies on the Board.** If you'd like to serve on the Board, please contact Topf Wells, Dyan Lesnik or Don Golembiewski (contact info at end of the newsletter).

**With Apologies to The Westminster Dog Club, This Auction Might be "Best of Show"**  
We've [already informed you](#) that the auction will feature the **best bamboo rod** and **watercraft** we've ever offered. Two more of the best:

**Fly tying:** Marc Chipault just donated some wonderful fly tying material and books that belonged to Mike Glazer, his father in law who recently passed away. Mike was a superb fly tyer, who remembered the kindness folks had shown him when he was a beginner. A lot of our beginning fly tyers have just experience Marc's and Mike's kindness by receiving some of the material and books. Marc has also donated Mike's fly tying kit. The Board checked it out and, wow, it's the best we've ever seen. It's beautifully designed and crafted of gorgeous wood and hardware. An artisan in Eagle River created it. It's in immaculate condition and will hold all your fly tying paraphernalia and material. Keep your tying area tidy and travel with your fly tying stuff with the utmost convenience and style. Just bid high enough at the Auction and it's yours.

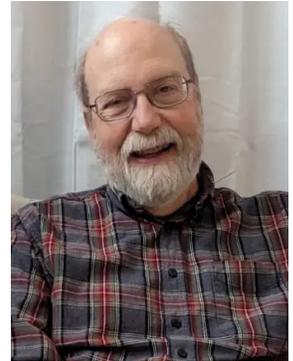
**Fly fishing:** Dave Graczyk, another generous member, won one of the grand prizes in the national TU raffle and has donated it to the Auction. This is the Cadillac, the Bentley, the Mercedes, the Rolls of sling packs. Cleverly designed and made of sturdy, lightweight materials, you'll exhibit style and convenience as you step into the stream. It's valued at over \$250!

## Remembering Ray Venn

By Topf Wells, SWTU President

The Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited lost an energetic and effective Board Member and longtime member and supporter when Ray Venn died suddenly on February 16. Please [use this link to read Ray's obituary](#). He led a varied, productive, happy life, centered in his family.

Ray was in his second stint as an SWTU Board Member, having served many years ago. That's an unusual pattern of service which reflects Ray's commitment to SWTU's conservation, education and fun mission. He participated in the full range of SWTU activities. In just this last year, he joined us for work days and was a superb instructor at several casting clinics we held for kids. At our last clinic, I was not helping a youngster much and asked Ray to take over. He had the kid casting like a champ in 15 minutes. He was a welcoming and friendly presence.



When it appeared last year that we might have a Board vacancy, Ray volunteered to serve at the Elections Meeting. What a fortunate choice for SWTU. Ray was a consummate Board Member. He studied all the issues and his comments were always wise, helpful and concise. He made a lasting contribution to our financial health when he worked with our Treasurer to secure a better rate for our checking account. He had decided to continue his service on the Board and we will miss him.

Carolyn, one of Ray's daughters, mentioned how he enjoyed discussing his time with SWTU and remembered him taking her to the Meicher Auctions. He loved spending time with his grandchildren with some of that spent fishing.

SWTU sends its most sincere condolences and our most heartfelt gratitude for his service to Carolyn and Katie, his daughters, and all his loved ones.

## Let's Be Careful Out There: First Aid Training

Let us know if you are interested in a free First Aid course

Some of us SWTU youngsters might remember this catch phrase from Hill Street Blues. The world weary police sergeant would send his cops out the door after every morning roll call and briefing with this reminder. As the series and life demonstrate, care doesn't always prevent accident or illness.



The SWTU Board recognizes this reality. Our work days have many folks working hard with power tools over uneven terrain. We also have crowds at different events where someone can suffer a medical emergency. We want everyone to be as safe as possible and to receive effective health if something goes wrong. We intend to be Care Full for our members and guests with proper training and equipment.

To those ends, the SWTU Board has voted to contract with the Red Cross to offer a First Aid course to interested members. This course covers instruction and practice, both online and, most importantly, in person, in the use of First Aid in emergency situations. SWTU members will take the same course at the same time and location. SWTU will cover all the expenses – yes, this course is free to SWTU participants.

Josh Reilly, SWTU Secretary, has researched the course.

**Course Title:** Adult First Aid/CPR/AED with Life Threatening Bleeding and Tourniquet Application- Blended Learning.

**Required online learning before in-classroom:** 3 hours and 15 minute self-paced web-based learning.

**In-classroom session:** 2 hour and 30 minute skills session.

**If interested, please [complete this brief online form](#) by Thursday, March 12.** Timing and logistics will be set once we determine level of interest – *and note that completing the form does not lock you into anything*. If you have questions, contact Josh at [jreilly.swtu@gmail.com](mailto:jreilly.swtu@gmail.com).

Please consider taking this course if you regularly attend SWTU events that draw lots of participants such as work days, casting clinics or fly tying classes. We hope to have folks complete this course before or early in our spring work day season. Please consider this opportunity and enroll ASAP if you're interested in enrolling. The odds are long that you'll ever use this training but you and whomever you help will be grateful you have First Aid skills.

SWTU will also purchase an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for use in a cardiac emergency. More information will be forthcoming on its use and availability. Again, Josh has researched the purchase carefully and we are attending to the advice of the American Red Cross staff in Madison. Huge thanks to Josh for the hours he's dedicated to this project.

## Spring 2026 Workdays: Save the Dates!

**Saturdays – 9am to 12 noon (Except for Tuesday, June 9)**

By Jim Hess, Conservation Chair

We would love to have you join us. If you are interested in carpooling to a workday, contact Dyan Lesnik ([dmlgriffin@gmail.com](mailto:dmlgriffin@gmail.com)) and she will try to find a contact for you.

**Saturday, March 28 – 9m to 12 noon** – Pleasant Valley Branch, Dane County, about 1 mile south of the intersection of County Rd A and H. Working with James Brodzeller and Shawn Esser clearing a heavy cover of honeysuckles on this Dane County easement.

**Saturday, April 11 – 9m to 12 noon** – Upper Yahara River in DeForest, 4601 Innovation Drive. We will be working with Village staff clearing honeysuckles and other invasive woodies. The site is on the Upper Yahara River Trail, so vehicles are not allowed on the trail. Village staff will provide transportation to and from the worksite. This is the same location where we worked last year.

**Saturday, April 25 – 9am to 12 noon** – Garfoot Creek, Dane County, where it crosses County Rd KP between Cross Plains and Black Earth. Working with DNR Fish Biologist, Kyle Olivencia, clearing box elders and invasive woodies just north of where Garfoot crosses County Road KP. Same location where we worked last year and is one of the earliest easements along Black Earth Creek and has a lot of history.

**\*Tuesday, June 9 – 9am to 3pm Special STIHL Workday\*** – Sugar River, Duerst property, 7309 Riverside Road. Just south of Verona on Hwy 69. Note: this is on a Wednesday. We will be working with a team of STIHL professional chain sawyers clearing large box elders. We have had three workdays at this site clearing the understory of invasive woodies, so the professional sawyers can focus on the box elders. Should be an exciting day.

**Saturday, May 16 – 9am to 12 noon** – Tree Planting - Smith Conley Creek, near 2800 County Rd H, Barneveld. Along with the Nohr Chapter, we will be assisting Justin Haglund, DNR Fish Biologist, with planting trees. This stretch of stream has been cleared of box elders and invasive woodies by our chapter and the DNR brush clearing crew and is now ready for native oaks.

**Saturday, May 30– 9am to 12 noon** – Big Spring Branch, Iowa County (5465 Big Spring Rd.) This will be a joint workday with the Nohr Chapter, clearing willows and other invasive woodies. We have had several joint workdays at this site and hopefully with a big turnout we can finish the job. Justin Haglund, DNR Fish Biologist, and Lloyd Meng, Fisheries Technician, will be directing and assisting us, along with some other DNR staff.

**Chainsaw training:** SWTU requires that all our sawyers receive the certified training such as that offered by Dane County, which has posted [a listing of classes](#). If you register, note that you are a volunteer with SWTU.

## Learn What Your Board's Been Up To

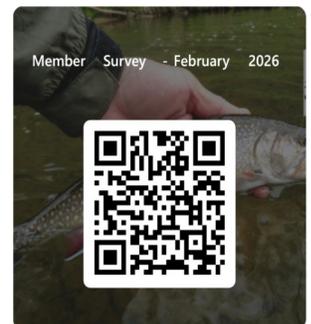
Minutes from SWTU Board of Director meetings can be viewed [in this Google Drive](#). If you have questions on what you read in them, reach out to one of the Board members listed on the last page of each newsletter. (Note that you may need to click the "Last Modified" header at the top to sort the list with the latest minutes at the top.)

## SWTU Member Survey

Our survey is out and many thanks to the many dozens who have completed it so far. Your input will help improve SWTU as a worthwhile, effective, and fun conservation organization and fishing club.

- We need more feedback, so please complete yours soon – do so [here online](#) or use this QR code.
- If you can't do it online, reach out to [mwestbury.swtu@gmail.com](mailto:mwestbury.swtu@gmail.com) who will provide you a paper survey with return envelope.
- You can also write our chapter (address below) and request a paper survey.

**Please don't wait!** It's open until March 31, but we don't want anyone to miss out on providing us feedback.



## Registration Open for the 2026 Women's Fly Fishing Clinics

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.

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 \$375 (registration site adds a fee that does not go towards the clinics).



### Basics Clinic By Women For Women: June 12-14th, 2026

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. [Register here online.](#)



### On the Water Skills Clinic – Intermediate: June 10-12, 2026

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. [Register here online.](#)



[Learn more here on swtu.org](#) – including lodging info, a link to the Facebook page and articles from past clinic attendees.

## Miss Kasey's Presentation or Want to See it Again? You're In Luck!

A great crowd at the February 2026 meeting enjoyed a fabulous presentation by Kasey Yallay, one of the DNR fish biologists in the northern part of the Driftless Area on some of the best watersheds in that area with some great reports on stream restorations and revitalized brook trout populations. If you missed that meeting or want a review of some of that information, [watch the YouTube video of Kasey's presentation to the Twin Cities TU Chapter.](#) Scroll down in their blog for the video to watch Kasey cover similar material she presented to us along with a report on an additional and excellent watershed.

## Vets on the Fly Activities

By Dyan Lesnik

Veterans on the Fly meets most Wednesday's at The V (VFW Post 1318, 2740 Ski Ln, Fitchburg). Fly tying starts around 5:30 but come early and have dinner at the VFW grill. We do a different fly each week, and all veterans and their families are welcome. Even if you are just curious about tying or fly fishing come on out – there is never any cost. [Learn more at their Facebook page.](#)

## Learn About and Help Out Project Green Teen (PGT)

SWTU has long supported this important program at Madison's Malcom Shabazz High School. Brian Counselman runs the program there and has shared a great summary of the program's accomplishment – as well as key dates of fly tying, fly casting and, of course, fly fishing!

They could use some help so [give this two-page flyer a look](#) and reach out to the contacts listed at the end of it if questions. Many of our members have volunteered for PGT in the past and found it enormously rewarding.

## Welcome New Members

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

Linn Duesterbeck  
Tamie Klumphyan

Ken Genskow  
Timothy Langton

The Nathan B Johnson Family  
Michele Mitro- Brogunier

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

If the history of fly fishing is viewed with the mirror of time, dry-fly fishing is a relatively new invention, having begun in the mid-1800s. Wet-fly fishing, on the other hand, existed for centuries before that. An important cornerstone of wet-fly angling as we know it today developed quietly in the English north and Scottish south during those centuries. The style spread widely in the mid- to late-1800s, when anglers of the English south learned about and adopted the methods. The English north is strikingly beautiful, with expansive moorlands, dense woodlands, cascading waterfalls, glacially weathered mountains, and verdant rich valleys. It is a land of swift stony-bottomed rivers that are home to ancient brown trout and centuries-old fly-fishing traditions. The area is the birthplace, incubator, and laboratory of what has become known as the "North-Country style" of fishing. Flies and methods of the north have been refined by observant and talented anglers for centuries.

North-Country flies are remarkably simple designs. They are sparsely dressed of silk threads, soft feathers, and natural furs and are usually tied without explicit wings. Their delicate profiles, translucent bodies, and graceful underwater movements of fur and feather amount to little more than a suggestion of a natural insect. A mere hint of imitation, but one that is quite sufficient for trout when offered up by experienced wet-fly anglers.

The earliest indications of a distinct North-Country style are, arguably, evident in certain flies of Charles Cotton, described in *The Compleat Angler* (1676). Cotton's flies were winged, but he describes their sparse and delicate dress as being quite unlike the thick heavy flies in common use in the English south. North-Country patterns appear in books and manuscripts through the 1700s, but they received a tremendous surge of attention during the 1800s. Indeed, the mid- to late-1800s was a golden age

of the North-Country school. Numerous authors and books contributed to its growth and popularity. Two landmark books published near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gathered together dispersed threads of the northern style and presented a thoroughly integrated strategy of wet-fly tying and fishing. *Yorkshire Trout Flies* (1885) by T.E. Pritt and *Brook and River Trouting* (1916) by H.H. Edmonds & N.N. Lee describe insects of northern rivers, pattern recipes for their imitation, and angling methods for success. The two books are today's definitive reference – the Old Testament – of classic North-Country wet flies.

*Yorkshire Trout Flies* presented pattern recipes but gave little guidance on how the flies are actually tied. *Brook and River Trouting* remedied that shortfall, as it provided quality photos both of the finished flies and the silks, furs, and feathers with which each is tied. Simplicity of the patterns plus quality photos of the finished flies made their tying understandable even by beginners. Flies described in *Brook and River Trouting* were not of Edmonds' or Lee's design. Rather, they were previously published patterns used widely in the north. *Brook and River Trouting* integrates accurate entomology with descriptions of insect behaviors, times of emergence, and matching flies. The book emphasizes above all else the importance of knowing the biology of trout and insects:

*"A thoughtful fisherman studies the water, its pools, currents and eddies, and ... realizes the necessity of a good knowledge of insect life, watercraft and the habitat of the trout, and becomes as intimate with each as an artist is with his colours."*

Edmonds' and Lee's minimalist approach to angling is evident in their selection of flies for the book. Rather than being an exhaustive collection of the very large number of existing North-Country flies, it gives recipes of thirty nine flies that are sufficient to catch trout all year long, in varying weather, and in any type of river. *Brook and River Trouting* demonstrates yet again that accurate presentation of a fly is always more important than precise imitation of a natural insect. © Rusty Dunn, 2026

## Brown Owl

*Brook and River Trouting* describes the Brown Owl as a caddisfly imitation for late April through June. As with other North-Country flies, the collar of soft hackle imitates both wings and legs of the natural.

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**Hook:** Wet fly, #14

**Thread:** Pearsall's Gossamer silk, orange (#6A)

**Wings:** Hackled with a reddish brown feather from the lesser coverts of a Tawny or Brown Owl's wing. (Substitute with wing marginal coverts of an English woodcock)

**Body:** Tying thread

**Head:** Bronze peacock herl

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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
Past President	Steve Musser
<i>Newscasts</i> Editor	Drew Kasel
Conservation Committee Chair	Jim Hess
Women's/ Diversity Initiative Chair	Tina Murray
Youth Education Chair for SWTU	Tina Murray

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