

# Newscasts

Summer 2026 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



## We May Hold an Event in August

**Are you interested in a get together in August 2026? Let us know!**

How about a casting clinic followed by a picnic on August 22? Probably in a park on Black Earth Creek.

**Before we set this up, we need to know if enough members are interested.** If you, family and friends are interested, please let us know by July 12. Visit <https://forms.office.com/r/HdWNnKb1CA> or scan this QR code to let us know if you're interested.

Our next "regular" Chapter Gathering will be Tuesday, September 8 and that will be followed by Fall Workdays and other activities. We hope you have a wonderful summer with family and friends, in nature and saying "wouldya look at that!" as you work to land an impressive fish.



## 2026 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:

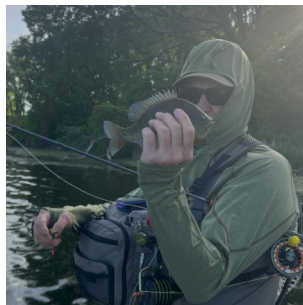
President: Topf Wells  
Vice President: Dyan Lesnik  
Secretary: Josh Reilly  
Treasurer: Michael Westbury  
Board Member: Linda Dorazio  
Board Member: John Freeborg  
Board Member: Don Golembiewski  
Board Member: Dave Graczyk  
Board Member: Henry Haugley  
Board Member: Gabe Park  
State Council Rep: Michael Williamson

Thank you for stepping up! We also thank Mark Maffit for his service on the board in many capacities over the years and remember the late Ray Venn for his contributions and commitment to SWTU.

## Vets on the Fly Activities – Summer 2026

By Dyan Lesnik

Fishing every Wednesday night through the months of May, June, August and September, 6-8pm. All Veterans and their families are welcome. Never any cost. A different location each week posted [on our Facebook site](#) or contact Dyan Lesnik ([dmlgriffin@gmail.com](mailto:dmlgriffin@gmail.com)) for more info. Here are some pictures from Dyan, and you can [find more on swtu.org](#).



## You Can Help Preserve a Very Special Place

Topf Wells

Our May meeting seems years ago but it was one of the most memorable SWTU presentations I've experienced. When John Griffith was a kid in California, he was incredibly impressed by the Wrigley family's purchase of 42,000 acres on Catalina Island to preserve it for the public (yes indeed, the gum and Cubs Wrigley's). He vowed to follow their example one day.

John now leads American Songbird Management and Recovery, which is purchasing for preservation and public enjoyment the 17,000 acre Gratiot River watershed on the UP's Keweenaw Peninsula. Think songbirds, brook trout, charismatic mammals, steelhead, healthy forests, waterfalls, etc. saved forever. The cost is \$27 million and he has \$10 million to go with a December deadline.

He asked for donations but in a doable fashion. He's going to need some big donors and he thinks a good way of convincing some to donate is to show region-wide, grass roots enthusiasm and support. To that end, he asks that each of us make a modest donation (as little as \$5, although he'll happily take more) online. Here's the link to make it easy to do so: <https://www.gratiotriverwatershed.org/>

I know we all get donation requests all the time but this is a great project. Please consider a donation. BTW, SWTU donated \$1,000. While the project is in the UP, it protects Lake Superior and its fishery and it's close enough for a road trip. BTW 2, John has donated a stay at a deluxe cabin on the Keweenaw and the Gratiot. Stay tuned for that opportunity.

## 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.)

## Attending the National TU Conference

Is a good idea and we should have some SWTU representatives there. It runs 9/23-27 in Minneapolis. It offers the chance to meet new TU friends, learn about national TU, attend seminars (what could be more fun), pick up some tips for SWTU, and even fish some. Although it's reasonably priced, it's still expensive. The Board is offering to help cover the expenses of up to five SWTU members with a stipend of \$200. We can't accommodate everyone so please contact [Michael Westbury](#) if you're interested. We'd ask whoever attends to provide a brief report to the Board.

## The Riversmith Clinic at Cross Plains Trout Days

By Topf Wells

We think we may have had the most participants ever. The community advertised the event more heavily, more activities and more music were scheduled, and our booth was better situated. Our casting instructors were busy from 10-140 teaching dozens to cast with more folks stopping by the booth to learn about trout, local streams and SWTU. The range of folks was fabulous with folks from 7 to 70 learning to fly cast. Some were casual and some were seriously focused on learning to fly fish. We had good partners in nearby booths including Groundswell Conservancy and the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association. BECWA's collection of aquatic invertebrates, seined from that part of the creek that morning, always attracts everyone's interest. Bug news was mixed. Lots of BWO nymphs, some of which were emerging by early afternoon (anglers take note: sizes #20 and 22), and scuds. No caddis, no larger mayflies, and too many New Zealand mudsnails.

Andy Morten and Dave Fowler brilliantly organized the Clinic. Participants and instructors had a great time. Curt Diehl demonstrated fly tying with his mastery of the Pink Squirrel. Joining Dave as patient and expert instructors were Tom Thrall, Henry Haugley, Linda Dorazio, Bob Brewer, Don Golembiewski, Jim O'Brien, Mark Berggren, Josh Reilly and Michael Westbury.

I've been involved in many of these and this was the best of all. Here's a short story highlighting how well I did as an instructor:

An adorable 6 or 7 year old girl wanted to learn to fly cast and I was the lucky one to get to show her what I know.

She was focused and handled a rod quite well and followed my suggestions perfectly. Then she looked at me and asked "Can we be done now?"  
Awwwwwww.

Don Golembiewski



## Let's Be Safe Out There

First Aid/CPR/AED & Life Threatening Bleeding training was a success. Ten chapter members attended the Red Cross training to learn these life-saving skills to help in the remote locations where we work. Our chapter purchased an AED that will be at workdays and other events, along with first aid and trauma kits.

## Women's Clinics Thanks Generous Fly Tyers

The Wisconsin Women Fly Fishing Clinics would like to give a big shout out to these fly tiers for supporting the clinics. Each woman got a fly box with enough flies to take themselves to the water and have quality choices to catch trout.

A big thank you to these tiers: **Phil Anderson, Jim Beecher, Dave Fowler, John Freeborg, Don Golembiewski, Claude Kazanski, Josh Reilly, AJ Sue, Michael Westbury, Paul Williams and Henry Nehls Lowe!**

We also want to extend thanks to **Terry Becker, Paul Johnson and Rich Molodzik**. We'd like to add a special thanks to Terry, who has donated for many years in great volume – including his recent donation of *170 dozen* flies!

We sure hope we didn't miss anyone. If we did our apologies and a big Thank you to you too!

Please think of the Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics during the upcoming winter. We like to send them home with a hemostat, nipper and fly box to have enough gear to head to the water after the clinics! We hope to get 25 women into the clinics next year. Please tie 25 each. Our wait list this year was 25 women over what we could take. More to come on how the clinics went.

*Tina Murray and all the fabulous volunteers providing programming for the Women's Basics and the Women's on the Water Skills Clinics.*

## Fish-focused Field Trip Fun With Lincoln 4th Graders

By Topf Wells

Fabulous. The kids loved it as did all of us who were in a teaching or kid watching mode.

The day started with with Mitch Trow and his DNR crew electro-fishing the stream. They explained their jobs with the DNR, encouraging the kids to think of such careers ( a theme that recurred throughout the morning). They found buckets of fish, including some large trout. They showed the fish to the kids, explained how each species was adapted to its niche in the stream, answered questions, and let the kids hold a fish. A number of kids decided to kiss fish, especially the white suckers. Those lips are irresistible, I guess. The kids love all the species. They are as delighted by the sculpin and suckers as by the trout. A lesson for us grown ups. No fish were harmed during this adventure.

Andy Morton kick sampled the riffle to find more buckets of stream life, this time for Bobbi Peckarsky to teach the kids how to be citizen scientists by examining the invertebrate life of streams with a few questions in mind. Bobbi is extraordinary; she is a retired stream ecologist from Cornell. She's great with kids. They identified many species of invertebrates and learned how different species reveal the health of the stream. They concluded Black Earth Creek is a fairly healthy stream. Andy is a long time member and leader in SWTU; Bobbi and he are mainstays of the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association.

Good science produces good answers and more questions. And so it was yesterday. Bobbi was astounded that we did not find one New Zealand mudsnail at the Scherbl Rd. riffle, our location on Black Earth Creek. That's an invasive species that causes great concern whenever it appears in a North American stream. Upstream in the creek at Zander Park, the snails are abundant. So, why the huge and significant difference?



Huge and most sincere thanks to SWTU and SoWBA for sponsoring this event and to all the folks who volunteered. Carolyn Byers and Mickenzee Okon are the SoWBA educators who have worked with the Lincoln School kids all year. This day shows how successful their work has been. Biggest thanks to Josie Guiney, her fellow teachers, assistants and to the Lincoln School 4th graders.

The kids are wonderful – smart, interested, fun, well behaved, respectful, just a joy to be around.

*Photos courtesy Carolyn Byers, Director of Education for the Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance*

## **Trees Planted, Seed Spread, and a Deadly New Fly Pattern | Workday Report 1**

By Topf Wells

*(see the end of this report for a thanks from the landowners!)*

Indeed, another fabulously varied work day. The chief mission was to plant 70 swamp white and bur oaks along the newly completed DNR restoration on Smith Conley Creek on CTH H near Hollandale. Justin Haglund, the DNR fish biologist who designed the project, and Scott Harpold, Vince Schmitz, and Pat Gorman, the operations crew who refined and implemented the project, planned the day with Jim Hess. Justin and Lloyd Meng, his colleague on all fish matters, dug holes and had the trees, fencing, and other paraphernalia in place. The trees will provide shade and promote the growth of other desirable streamside vegetation. The first of many thank yous: that prep work makes tree planting fun, not drudgery.



19 SWTU volunteers and 4 DNR staff assembled, divided into teams and had all the trees properly planted in about 90 minutes. That left time for, as always, food and fun conversation. Dyan outdid herself with a cookie with dried fruit, nuts, coconut, oats, and honey-- delectable and healthy. My contribution looked like a sugar cookie but the baker informed me it was a French butter cookie. The French use butter so well. And pork sticks. We spent time with the Bennetts, who own the land with one of the easements the DNR worked on. They're excellent botanists and birders. The property has wetlands, a sedge meadow, grasslands, and a wooded hillside and bluff, fabulous bird habitats. They also located an endangered lichen on the property-- gotta be great botanists to find that.

The break ended with Don Golembiewski presenting all of us with his brand new, deadly bluegill and bass bug pattern, the DRIFTLESS DECIBEL DECEIVER. Don creates them from the foam ear plugs some of us use for hearing protection on workdays. He cautions to remove the hooks before using them as ear plugs. Everyone agreed: oh yeah, these will take bluegills. Way to go and thanks, Don.

We ended the day with spreading a wet soil seed mixture and mulch on a few bare spots on the banks. Justin remarked that the DNR easements cover 82% of Smith Conley. These are old easements and most folks looking at the creek might think: big deal, looks like a pain to fish. But Justin's surveys show the creek has a surprising amount of wild browns and a few brookies. The creek needs a lot of work but 25 years ago so did Gordon and Klittleson. Justin's surveys and the two SWTU workdays of three years ago convinced him the creek is worth some work. Based on what we saw today and a stretch upstream where a privately funded stream and prairie restoration occurred on an easement, I think he's right.

This creek flows through a wetland with a lot of sand in the streambed. I'd give the restoration some time to heal before fishing it. Justin and Jim are also contemplating a project that would make the long walk into the creek easier. The long walk means anglers are going to have a peaceful experience.

Thanks to all who showed up, including some great Board Members and work day veterans. We were deeply honored to have Caryll Terrell, Caryll is one of the great environmental advocates in Wisconsin over the last 40 years. She helped create many of the environmental and conservation laws and procedures that protect Wisconsin's natural resources and the folks who depend on and enjoy them. In Dane County, she served on several important commissions and always was a kind, respectful, well informed and strong voice for environmental protection. She's a good tree planter too.

We continue to depend on Jim Hess, Dyan Lesnik, and Wayne Griffin to plan these days, lug all the equipment we need, make sure the day runs smoothly, and do a lot of the work. Thank you.

Photos courtesy Jim Hess and Dyan Lesnik. [See the story on swtu.org for many more!](http://swtu.org)

## The landowners say Thanks!

Everyone,

*We greatly appreciate the terrific work everyone did on Saturday on the creek project. It was truly amazing that all the trees were planted in 3+ hours. We will keep our eyes on the cages and trees for many years.*

*Some of you probably noticed the beaver stumps along the creek in several places - these were new this past winter. Our trapper friends only caught one beaver but there must be more. So the cages and tubes are essential for maintaining the trees.*

*The rain we've been getting since Saturday is great to get the trees established - good timing!*

*And a huge thanks to Jim and his crew who helped fix our east bridge that was tilted over from the storm. This morning it's still there and feels solid. If anyone knows someone who builds footbridges please let us know!*

*For those who don't know this creek, it is spring fed upstream, which means it does not freeze in winter. It is amazing to see the creek open and flowing when there is snow and ice everywhere. Does this mean you can fish in winter? Perhaps, because the mallards stay all winter on the creek and must feed on something.*

*And the creek is stocked with brown trout every year at the bridge on Prairie Rd, less than a mile further up the valley.*

*Once the parking lot is finished you'll be able to access the creek along our neighbor's easement along the west fence. There is no easement to the creek on our property. If you come to fish and have a story to tell as a result please let us know!*

*Please share this message with everyone who came Saturday and others who were unable to make it.*

*Jim Bennett and Janet Moredock*

## Generations | Workday report 2

By Topf Wells

Twenty-seven SWTU and Nohr Chapter volunteers showed up for our work day at Big Spring. We finished cutting and treating willows and box elders. The DNR now takes over in the fall or spring with burns and other steps to restore native vegetation.

The skies were a bit overcast, the temperature moderate, and the breezes gentle and consistent. The willows were not so friendly. They grew in clumps with grasses, usually reed canary, covering the stumps that needed to be sprayed. Chain saws, brush saws, and loppers were the tools of choice but none made the task easier. Lots of bending. I'll be practicing the stretches my physical therapist recommends. We stuck with it and the willows are gone, gone, gone. The bird nest and fledglings we discovered, however, are still there and in good shape when we left.



This is one of our most cooperative projects. Our TU partner has been our good friends in the Nohr Chapter. The DNR fish and wildlife managers have been coordinating efforts on a big swath of the public lands at Big Spring.

Removing the willows eliminates a favorite beaver food and dam material. Beavers are the subject of endless discussion in Wisconsin and elsewhere. On this stretch of stream, the dams hurt more than they help with sedimentation and warming water temperatures. The restored native vegetation, scattered hardwoods, grasses and forbs, will be better for birds, bugs, and brookies and less attractive to beavers. The DNR and we have already planted some of those trees in the areas we had worked on. They were in great shape today.

A special thanks to all who volunteered today. It's the time of year for graduations and other special events and, to be honest, today's weather was great for fishing. Not easy to find the time today for the drive and hard work at Big Spring. Thanks.

Some rewards awaited. The Nohr Chapter treated all of us to a great brat cookout. We also had a great group of folks of varying ages and experiences. This workday saw several generations of conservationists working together. Three members of the UW Madison Hoofers Conservation Club worked really hard, were lots of fun, and saw the Big Spring for the first time. We hope this is the first of many work days they'll join. We had some great TU conservationists from Illinois led by Jerry Sapp. Jerry has lead the effort to fund the DNR brushing crew for several years. Some of our best SWTU volunteers showed up again. They really are essential to the success of these days. It's always fun to catch up on the latest fishing stories and tips.



We had the sad opportunity to say goodbye to Jared Myers on his last day as a DNR technician at the Dodgeville office. All of us at SWTU and the Nohr Chapter have worked with Jared. We admire and are grateful for that work. He's always hard working, productive, and upbeat. We and the DNR are going to miss him.

Huge thanks to Jared for this last hurrah. He was the sole DNR representative. He had mowed trails so we could access the work site and he handled the UTV and all the DNR gear and logistics. Ted Swenson organized Nohr's participation. Ted is efficient, optimistic, and an extremely dedicated conservationist. He helps keep the Nohr/SWTU cooperation strong and fun. Dyan and Wayne again drove the trailer, organized equipment, and attended to many of the details of the work day. Jim, our Conservation Committee Chair and work day guru, planned and guided another excellent day (and cut and treated a lot of willows himself).

Photos courtesy Dyan Lesnik. [See the story on swtu.org for more and larger.](http://swtu.org)

## A Big Thanks from Project Green Teen

Brian Counselman, Malcolm Shabazz City High School

I just wanted to reach out to thank you all for another year of PGT support. We had a really great group of students this year and lots of terrific support from SWTU guides and fly fishing enthusiasts beyond (thanks to the amazing guide wrangling of Danny and Ellie again!) to make for some really formative experiences for our young people. One student, Phoebe, went home with a new Dave Fowler crafted rod (she was very excited!) and a number of other students are planning to purchase their rods at the end of the year.

As we were out in Avalanche, Tina and I kept being continually impressed with our students' enthusiasm for both fly fishing and general adventuring in nature. Leaves me hopeful for both the state of PGT as well our world more broadly quite honestly. In our topsy turvy world, just wanted to let you know that you definitively helped contribute to some lifelong memories, experiences, and skills for some young people that will hopefully carry the touch for fly fishing, outdoor recreation, restoration, and innovative education into the future.

I appreciate all the support!



## Welcome New Members

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

Todd Fischer	Devin Biggs	David Dybdahl	Larry Paskvan
Mark Treacy	Ian Mangan	Steve McHoes	Paul Reith
Rod Rynes	Daniel Simon	Wes Roscoe	Troy Brazell
Joseph Warden	Keith Gilkey	Jacob Zimmerman	Brandon Herbert

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](mailto:Dyan.Lesnik@swtu.org) 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

Some of history's most famous trout and salmon flies are frighteningly complex. This is especially true of Atlantic Salmon flies in Great Britain from the mid-1800s through the early 1900s. That period, which coincides with Queen Victoria's reign, was a time of great prosperity. Both the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire were at or near their peaks and had created immense societal wealth and upward mobility. The era was a time of conspicuous affluence. Many aspects of daily life (architecture, home furnishings, fashion, etc.) adopted a decidedly showy and extravagant character. Victorian splendor even trickled down to the design of salmon flies. Such flies evolved to be "full dressed", meaning they were elaborate designs tied of numerous rare (often precious) brightly colored materials. Imitation was of no concern (Atlantic Salmon don't feed after entering rivers), but an intricate and beautiful appearance was paramount. For example, the famous Jock Scott full-dressed salmon fly, designed in 1850 for the River Tweed, contains no fewer than 17 individual feather elements, many of which are taken from exotic birds collected throughout the British Empire. A single Jock Scott took a skilled fly tyer two or more hours to complete! Such were the extravagances of angling's newly minted gentry class. Beautiful? Yes indeed. Practical? Not so much.

Fortunately, trout fly design did not suffer from Victorian excesses. For example, the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear (GRHE) is one of history's all-time great trout flies. It contains thread plus three common materials and is so ancient that its origins are uncertain. Angling books as early as Walton and Cotton's *The Compleat Angler* (1676) describe flies tied of hare's fur. The name "Hare's Ear" was first used for a fly (as opposed to the material) in 1800 (S. Taylor, *Angling in All It's Branches*). Flat gold tinsel appeared later, first as a tag and then as ribbing to divide the abdomen into fuzzy segments that imitate nymphal gills. Hare's Ear wet flies proliferated during the 1800s under many different names, including Hare's Lug, Hare's Fleck, and Hare's Pluck. Regardless of name,

Hare's Ear wet flies have long been angler favorites.

The Hare's Ear even enjoyed a lengthy period of fame in the late 1800's as a celebrated dry fly. Dry-fly fishing was widespread in the UK by the mid- to late-1800's, and the Hare's Ear dry was very popular. F.M. Halford, the influential author who popularized dry-fly fishing worldwide, was first to use the term "Gold-Ribbed" Hares Ear in print. He declared in 1886 (*Floating Flies and How to Dress Them*) that a dry GRHE was the single most productive fly on the River Test, his home waters. Halford was famously rigid in his opinions and, remarkably, he later stopped using the GRHE because his fully developed approach to dry-fly fishing required that flies imitate *specific* hatching insects. Halford decided that a GRHE did not imitate a *specific* species, did not therefore conform to his angling philosophy, and its use was unsporting.

Today's GRHE is usually fished deeply as a generic searching nymph, but it is also effective at the surface. Quoting Halford: "*It has always been my theory that [the GRHE] is a fair representation of a dun in the act of disentangling itself from the nymphal shuck.*" Americans Preston Jennings and Ray Bergman described in the 1930's great success with GRHE wet flies after cutting off their wings. The resulting stubs suggested emergent wing buds, and the snipped flies fished well just under the surface during a hatch. A wing case later replaced the wing buds, and the modern GRHE nymph was born.

Fly tyers are an unsettled lot, what with all the tweaking and amending of perfectly good fly patterns. Evolution of the Hare's Ear is a good example. It prospered at times as a wingless wet, a winged wet, and both a winged and wingless dry fly. Some features of the older flies were evolutionary dead-ends found today only in angling's literary fossil record. Remarkably, after all the tinkering with GRHE designs, the modern nymph looks a lot like the original.

For proof of how effective an ancient fly can be, present a #16 or #18 Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear in or just under the surface during a BWO hatch. The tug on your line will confirm that simple flies tied of blue-collar materials can be both beautiful AND practical! © Rusty Dunn, 2026

### ----- Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear Nymph -----

A considerable amount of untidiness is needed in the GRHE nymph. Wet hair fibers quiver in the currents, thereby appearing lifelike and attracting trout.

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**Hook:** Dry-fly (surface presentation) or nymph (deep presentation) hook, #10 - #20

**Thread:** 8/0 Uni, tan or brown

**Tail:** Guard hairs of natural hare's fur

**Abdomen:** Natural hare's mask

**Rib:** Flat gold tinsel

**Wing case:** Feather barbs of a mottled turkey tail

**Thorax:** Natural hare's mask, darker in color than the abdomen; pick out some of the long fibers to imitate legs

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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.)

Not a member of Trout Unlimited yet? Join the SWTU chapter by visiting <http://tu.org/join061>

If you know of a member not receiving emails from SWTU, please have them email [madkasel@gmail.com](mailto:madkasel@gmail.com)

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