

Newscasts

September 2026 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Fall Fishing – Trouty Tips and Tricks

A casual, fishing focused chapter gathering on Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Several chapter members are stepping up to share some tips to help you close out the 2026 trout season strong. From streams to flies to knots and overall ways to approach or think about fishing this time of year, you will leave with at least one idea that will help put you on more fish.

This will be a more casual meeting with time to catch up, share fish stories and make plans for fall fishing. It's a great meeting for more recent members or newer people to this area.

Please join us September 8. As usual, we'll meet at Schwoegler's with food and drink available anytime after 5:30 and fall fishing tips will be shared starting around 7. Schwoegler's is on Grand Canyon Drive on Madison's west side with ample parking, good food, beverages, and service.

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

Good Food, Good Times and Best News

By Topf Wells

Thirty SWTU members and friends gathered for our picnic on Saturday, August 22. Don Golembiewski proved to be the master of brat grill, Linda Dorazio the queen of key lime and pecan pies, and Michael Westbury the pork smoker in chief. Many other Board Members helped and a good time was had by all. Plenty of fish stories, reacquainting with old friends and making some new ones.

We were happy to honor Jack and Bonnie Lawton, stalwart SWTU members and supporters. **They had just sold their family property on the Wolf River to preserve it and enable the public to enjoy it.** This is the best DNR trout stream purchase in years: 120 acres with over a mile of double bank frontage on one of the best parts of the Wolf River. Don't take my word for it; [read some of the letters to the DNR Board supporting this purchase](#). (ed. Note: these are well worth your time and we'd in particular point you to the letter from Bill Stokes starting on page 10.)

State TU strongly supported the acquisition. The Lawton family had owned and enjoyed this land since 1955 and had been wonderful stewards. They've now enabled all of us to experience the richness and beauty of the Wolf and the surrounding forest, wetlands and tributary streams.

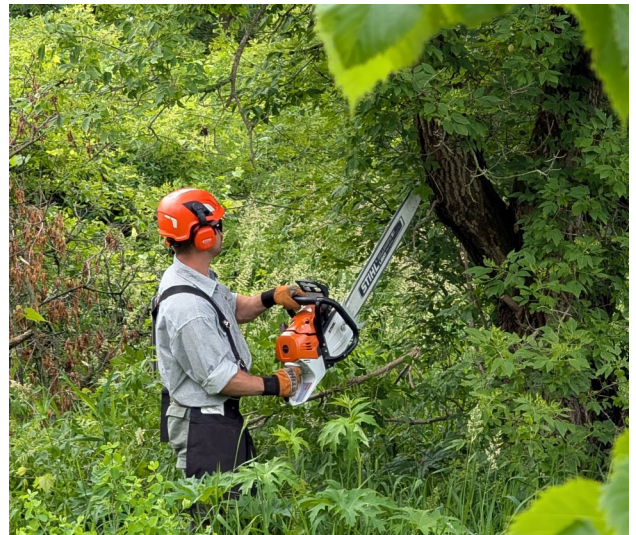
With two successful years of picnic accomplished, the Board intends to make this an annual event.

Full Circles – Workday Report (Tuesday, June 9, 2026)

By Topf Wells

SWTU showed up, Stihl showed up, Dane County showed up, TUDARE showed up, the WI Chapter of BHA showed up. All to improve the Sugar River at the County's newest, 640 acre property on the river.

Thanks to TUDARE, SWTU had been granted the services of the Stihl work crew to complete the next step in the restoration of the river at this point. SWTU had spent 3 long work days clearing the invasive understory on a bermed riverbank. Today, Stihl's job was to clear all the box elders and SWTU's to help clear the branches. All in order for the County to remove or breach the berms and reconnect the river to its floodplain and a spring complex. The former reduces stream bank erosion and the latter provides a source of



cold, clean water to the river. That's essential for the Dane County trout stream that's most vulnerable to climate change and warming temperatures.

Forty (!) volunteers were ready to go. And away we went. This is the fifth project Stihl has undertaken with a WI TU chapter and they always have an ambitious work plan. For the first time, they and we finished all the planned work and a bit more. The amount of work at this site over two years is extraordinary and, with the County's work, the best is yet to come.

The day was muggy and some of the ground slippery enough to be treacherous. Everyone was careful. All of us at SWTU were impressed with Stihl's emphasis on safety and the instructions issued at the start of the day. We're really careful about our days but we can learn from Stihl. Also impressive was their first aid preparations. Thanks to Josh Reilly, our Secretary, and the SWTU Board, we're following that example.

Stihl provided donuts and a delicious lunch. They have also donated \$2,000 worth of Stihl equipment for our work days. Just wait for our Fall and Winter work days. Dyan thought ahead with the muggy day in mind and provided ice cold watermelon to end the lunch. The perfect food for a dang near perfect day.

SWTU offers our more heartfelt thanks to Stihl. Besides the sawing, teaching, and donating, they are a wholly great and fun bunch to work with. I thought they'd do all the sawing and we all the hauling. Instead, they rotated sawyers. The Stihl folks who were now sawing were helping us haul a tremendous boost to productivity, especially at the more challenging site. Watching the Stihl crew take down the gnarly, twisted box elders was a good learning experience for all the SWTU sawyers.

We would not have had the crew without TUDARE and Dane County. Thank you.

Special thanks to Dan Pherson of Stihl, who is hard working and incredibly gracious. Again, Sara Strassman and Paul Krahn of TUDARE enabled us to win this grant. James Brodzeller of Dane County was a key organizer of the event, had the County UTV and a crew on hand, again essential to the day's productivity.



We hope this work day marks the beginning of a new partnership with SWTU. Zack Hanson, who operates Homegrown Native Landscapes in New Glarus and is a Board Member of the WI Chapter of the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, was a prodigious worker. BHA is a national, non-profit, grassroots conservation organization. We hope to have Zack and other BHA members at future work days.

Zack provided one of the full circle moments today. Kathleen Falk was working with Zack and asked why he volunteered. One reason, he said, was he loved fishing the Sugar on the Falk/Wells Wildlife Area. Kathleen chuckled and said well, I'm Falk and that guy over there is Wells. The bigger completed circle was this day as the fruition of over two years of work by TUDARE, Dane County, Stihl, and SWTU. For that commitment of time and focus we have to thank Dyan Lesnick and Wayne Griffin, who have become linchpins of our work days with hauling the trailer and attending to many of the logistics of the day. Jim Hess, who had to miss the day, spent hours in planning the event. This was certainly our most complex work day in years and Jim's planning, communication, and walk throughs were crucial.

This was the final work day of the spring season. The final and most earnest thanks go to all the TU volunteers who showed up on a muggy, Tuesday morning. Many of them showed up at all our days. We did a lot of good this spring and had a lot of fun. Thank you.

Photos courtesy Dyan Lesnik. [See the story on swtu.org for many more.](https://www.swtu.org)

2026 SWTU Fall Workdays

Jim Hess, Conservation Chair

All are Saturdays from 9am to 12 noon and aimed to avoid UW home football games, the 9-day deer gun season, Thanksgiving weekend, and back-to-back workdays:

Sept 26 – Gordon Creek – This will be a Joint workday with the Nohr Chapter at Brue Road on the Trent Nelson easement. We'll be working with Justin Haglund and Lloyd Meng removing boxelders and willows upstream and downstream of the bridge. There is plenty of parking along Brue Road for volunteers.

Oct 10 – Upper Yahara River, Deforest – Returning to the same location as last spring (River's Turn Park, 4601 Innovation Drive). We will be working with Greg Hall, Deputy Director of Public Services, and his staff removing invasive woodies.

Oct 31 – Pleasant Valley Branch – Continuing our clearing at this site on Dane County Rd H, working with James Brodzeller removing honeysuckles and box elders.

Nov 14 – Mt Vernon, Deer Creek – Continuing our work on this site at Pop's Knoll Park, State Hwy 92 working with James Brodzeller.

Dec 5 – Garfoot Creek on Garfoot Road – Working with Kyle Olivencia, Scott Harpold, and Vince Schmitz clearing the stream and making brush bundles. Here is a link to this site: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WL2p29EkxomJFLRh8>

Protect Our Lands

By Topf Wells

National TU has asked all its members for our immediate help in protecting our national forests. Please use this link for thorough explanations of the issue and ways to contact the federal elected officials and administrators who can answer our call. This is the most intense effort I've ever seen TU undertake to protect threatened resources.

Briefly, the Trump Administration is proposing rule changes that will open the national forests to more roads, more development and more harm to natural resources, like creeks, streams and rivers.

I'm not familiar with western forests but I've spent many hours in the Chequamegon part of Wisconsin's national forest. It already had roads all over the place and precious few wilderness areas. It also contains the headwaters of several Lake Superior watersheds, including part of the White. More roads will not improve the forest and probably hurt it.

It's easy to make your voice heard. [Please use the link and follow its prompts to help protect our national forests.](#)

Gilda's Club Casting Clinics

Several were held over the summer, including one on the water with many actually catching fish! Andy Morton was also able to give a brief history of fly fishing and a quick demonstration on fly tying. Many thanks to Andy, Dave Fowler, John Strauss, Don Golembiewski, Wayne Griffin, Jim O'Brien and Tom Thrall for being such great instructors. And to Linda Dorazio for coordinating. Here are some photos from the clinics, courtesy Dyan Lesnik, and [you can find many more in the story on swtu.org.](#)



Vets on the Fly Activities – Fall 2026

By Dyan Lesnik

Fishing every Wednesday night through September, 6-8pm, then off in October. 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) for more info. Here are some pictures from Dyan, and you can find more on swtu.org.

Musky Fool Shop Closing/Liquidating – Terrific Conservation Partners

[Read the note here on their website](#) and note the opportunity to stock up on gear (always a tremendous array of items there) and help clear inventory. They have been a great partner for the community and our natural resources ... just earlier this year [we thanked them for a generous donation to our chapter](#). We will miss them as a shop and wish the owners, employees and MF community the very best.



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 volunteer Board seeks to be as transparent as possible, hence this item and link in every newsletter. This month, we are also sharing [our annual report filed to National Trout Unlimited](#), which reports on financial matters, volunteer activity, various types of community outreach, board makeup and more. It's a great way to learn more about your chapter.

Welcome New Members

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

Matt Dorschel
Peter Wickman
Luke Briccetti

Kimberly Bannon
Jason Gann
Charlie Pfennigwerth

Nico LaBracke
Larry Hale

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

Have you ever thought about designing the perfect trout fly? A fly that is simple, tied with readily available materials, and so effective it catches trout regardless of the hatch. A fly that imitates – or is at least perceived by trout to imitate – mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, terrestrials, crustaceans, and even midges. One that finds trout even when the water appears lifeless. A fly so versatile that your stuffed-to-the-gill fly boxes could all be replaced by one small tin tucked in a shirt pocket. Well, fantasize no longer my friend. Your fly is at hand. It was designed over 300 years ago, but maybe you missed it.

March Brown mayflies are the first large aquatic insects to hatch in an English spring, usually appearing in mid-March. Hatches of North American March Browns (two distinct species) commence in mid-March to early July depending on the species and geographic location. March Brown imitations are among the oldest fly patterns in recorded history. The very first English-language angling manuscript was authored by Juliana Berners in 1496 (*A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*). Her “*donne flye*” was one of 12 described fly patterns, and many angling scholars believe it imitated March Browns. Berners’ descriptions of insects and their imitations, however, were so brief and general that uncertainty still persists about which insect(s) each fly imitated. Similarly, Charles Cotton’s 65 fly patterns added to the 1676 edition of Isaak Walton’s *The Compleat Angler* do not unambiguously include a March Brown imitation.

The March Brown era began in earnest in 1689 with publication of James Chetham’s 2nd edition of *The Angler’s Vade Mecum*. Chetham described a “*Moorish Brown*” artificial fly that almost certainly imitates the mayfly we now call ‘March Brown’. A fly explicitly named “March Brown” appeared in print in 1800 with George Scotcher’s *The Fly Fisher’s Legacy*, although the name was likely in common usage well before that. ‘March Brown’ remains today the common name for both insect and artificial fly.

March Browns are found in rapid, well-oxygenated, free-stone streams, but they are rare or completely absent in

slow silty streams. Nymphs are brown to reddish brown clingers. Duns are large (hook sizes #10 - #12), brown to grayish-brown in color, and segmented with highlights of pale yellow. Wings are dun-colored and darkly mottled grayish brown. Spinners look similar to duns but with translucent wings.

Generations of highly respected authors have praised effectiveness of March Brown flies, especially wet-fly patterns. They note that even when plentiful March Brown duns drift atop the surface, wet flies are usually more effective than dries. March Brown nymphs swim poorly and require considerable time to reach and transit through the surface film during a hatch. Therein likely explains the superiority of wet flies. Such authors additionally note that March Brown wet flies are effective long before and long after the known weeks of March Brown emergence. March Brown wets are excellent even in rivers that are completely devoid of the naturals. March Brown magic is not limited to mayfly imitation either. Many accomplished authors praise March Brown wets when trout actively feed on caddisflies, stoneflies, crustaceans (e.g. scuds), certain terrestrials (e.g. grass-moths) and, yes, even midges (large sizes for stillwaters; tiny sizes for rivers and streams).

Thus, despite the name “March” and despite a long history of use to imitate a specific hatch, March Brown wet flies are excellent general attractors that can be effective in all waters at all times. Only a cherished few fly patterns can make such a claim. Famed Norwegian outdoor adventurer Fridtjof Nansen succinctly summarized March Brown prowess thusly, “*Give me two March Browns and a box of matches and I’ll survive the whole summer*”.

After 300-plus years of tinkering and substitution, thousands of March Brown dressings have been described. Nymphs, emergers, duns, and spinners with seemingly endless permutations of threads, furs, feathers, fibers, and colors have been published. Soft-hackled March Brown Nymphs have proved to be especially effective and versatile. They can be fished deeply to imitate nymphs or larvae near the bottom, swung across currents or rising upward to imitate ascending nymphs or pupae, just under the surface to imitate transitional nymphs or pupae, or awash in the surface film to imitate struggling emergers, failed/drowned duns, and spent spinners.

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----- March Brown Nymph -----

This is Jim Leisenring’s pattern for the March Brown Nymph (*The Art of Tying the Wet Fly*, 1944). For use as a general wingless wet attractor, vary hook sizes & colors as desired.

Hook: 1X-long nymph hook, #10 - #14

Thread: Pearsall’s Gossamer silk (hot orange) is traditional, but any orange thread will work just fine.

Tail: Feather barbs of mottled brown partridge

Rib: Fine gold tinsel/wire or pale yellow buttonhole twist thread

Body: Natural or dyed hare’s poll mixed to a reddish-brown color; dub the body rough and scraggly

Hackle: Mottled brown partridge taken from the back, wing, neck, or head; length to hook point or barb



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

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