Newscasts

November 2026 serving the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Daydreams and Plans

Join our chapter gathering on Tuesday, November 10, 2026



The local trout season ends and many of us turn our minds to our next cast ... the bite, the fight, the net. Where and when will it be? November's SWTU meeting will provide inspiration for great trips in '27 and some fun facts and photos.

Four stalwart SWTU members will report on some fabulous trips and fish taken this year. The line up, from East to West:

- Andy Morton on Atlantic Salmon (and lobster) in Nova Scotia
- John Lyons on Arctic Char and Brook Trout (big, dry fly eating brook trout) in Maine
- Henry Nehls-Lowe and John Freeborg on DYI'ing for all the great trout species in Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Wyoming and Idaho

Please join us for this Salmonid Jamboree, Tuesday, November 10, at Schwoegler's (Grand Canyon Drive on Madison's West Side). Dinner and drinks from 5:30 with presentations about 7.

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

SWTU Clinics for UW Hoofers: Fly Casting on Sept 24th & Fly Tying on Nov 3rd
By Henry Nehls-Lowe



It was a fine September evening when SWTU provided a Fly Casting clinic for the UW Hoofers Outing Club. Fifteen Hoofers attended with a similar number of casting enthusiasts making for a perfect 1:1 ratio. Many thanks to instructors Kathy & Dave Ford, John Freeborg, Wayne Griffin, Don Golembiewski, Henry Haugley, Kalyn Hoggard, Claude Kazanski, Andy Morton, Henry Nehls-Lowe, Tom Thrall, and Paul Williams.

Next up for SWTU is the Nov 3rd Fly Tying Clinic for the Hoofers at UW Memorial Union, with a dozen instructors already signed up. We are hopeful for a repeat of SWTU's March 2025 Fly Tying Clinic, when the room brimmed with enthusiasm as we guided over 20 Hoofers through the basics of tying various flies, plus some fly-themed jewelry. See more photos from Henry in the story on swtu.org.

Trout Unlimited Fly-Tying Courses – 2027



Trout Unlimited invites you to learn fly tying or improve your tying skills this winter. Experienced SWTU instructors will teach both beginning and intermediate level fly-tying courses in Fitchburg starting Wednesday January 13, 2027. Both beginning and intermediate courses meet on **Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 PM** at the Fitchburg Community Center (5510 Lacy Rd., Fitchburg) beginning January 13, 2027. Courses run for eight consecutive Wednesdays (final class March 3, 2027). Classes consist of instructor-led demonstrations and hands-on tutorials. The courses are completely free of charge, and all materials needed during in-class instruction are provided. You need only supply fly-tying tools and thread, a list of which is available at https://www.swtu.org/learn/flytying/flytying-classes/.

Beginning Fly Tying is intended for those with limited previous fly-tying experience, including complete beginners. General techniques needed as a foundation for fly tying are established, and basic but effective trout fly patterns are demonstrated and practiced. An instructional booklet with pattern sheets is provided free of charge.

Intermediate Fly Tying is intended for those who have a solid foundation of fly-tying experience and want to improve their proficiency. The course builds on the foundations of Beginning Fly Tying and progresses to more challenging fly patterns. Techniques and materials are more varied than Beginning Fly Tying, the patterns can be more complex, and the hook sizes are considerably smaller than flies of the beginning course.

Advanced registration is required! Register online at the Fitchburg Recreation Department (https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/fitchburg/activity/search). If you've not previously created a customer account with Fitchburg Recreation, you must do so before registering.

Questions? See https://www.swtu.org/learn/flytying/flytying-classes/ for additional information. Or, email questions to Phil Anderson at swtu-flytying@outlook.com.

Go Team!

SWTU does fantastic things for cold water resources, and we appreciate and need involvement from all like-minded folks. Pitch in with our Teams and workdays and you will get more good feelings in return for your support. Step up and share a stake in our collective success for trout.

Here's your opportunity: The SWTU Board unanimously approved the creation or revitalization of some Teams and we need people to join them. More to come, but we are starting right away with two Teams.

- **Events –** Dyan Lesnik, our VP, chairs the Team for a spring fundraiser, summer picnic, awards presentation and all round good times. John Freeborg, who chaired the last successful event, is helping but Dyan needs more folks on the team.
- **Leadership –** Recruiting candidates for officers and board members should be ongoing and Don Golembiewski will be the Team captain to do so.

Please consider helping. Contact Dyan or Don at membership meetings, work days or with the contact info at the end of this newsletter.

Spring is in The Air; Time For a Fling

SWTU's Spring Fling returns next year, April 3, 2027, at the East Side Businessmen's Club. We'll feature fun, food, drink, contests, bucket raffles, auctions and more. Best of all, the chance to connect with old and new friends. All proceeds will benefit SWTU and local trout conservation. Dyan Lesnik leads the team for this event and can use some more help. Contact Dyan at dmlgriffin@gmail.com or (318) 349-481 three.

Upper Yahara, Looking Good – Oct 10 2026 Workday Report

By Topf Wells



SWTU returned to Dane County's newest trout stream, the Upper Yahara River in Deforest on Saturday, 10/10. About two dozen of us decided to finish clearing the stream bank of invasives and unwanted vegetation. Today, buckthorn occupied our attention. Dyan Lesnik probably put it best: "Today buckthorn became my least favorite invasive." Extraordinarily dense with some examples of buckthorn becoming a tree given enough time.

The brush saws and chainsaws whirred, haulers created huge piles, and the sprayers made sure the buckthorn was done for the foreseeable future.* We made it to the creek and there encountered a vision of the future. The creek looks pretty good and holds several year classes of wild brown trout. But it needs some work. The point we reached had some work stream bank and habitat stabilization and enhancement done years ago.** My goodness gracious ... no doubt we were standing above some trout in happy homes and undeniable evidence that the creek will respond to improvement.

More encouragement was forthcoming. The village of Deforest has just completed the first year of its 5 year restoration of the creek and a small portion was visible upstream of the bridge near our work site. Lots of work and love are going into that creek; the work is carefully planned, engineered, and implemented.



Greg Hall and Judd Blau of DeForest's Public Works joined us in working hard. Two other special guests were Kyle Olivencia, the DNR fish biologist for this area, and Jenna, his fiance. Maybe not the most romantic date but incredibly supportive of them to work with us on a lovely Saturday. And so thanks to all the SWTU members who could have been fishing or breakfasting or not sweating so much. Special thanks to a great turnout of Board Members and Officers.

We replaced the calories we burned with doughnuts, courtesy of Greg and Judd, Dyan's oh so fabulous muffins and apple cookies, and pork sticks. SWTU will always provide a balanced diet.

Jim Hess planned another great work day. He also announced that as he turns 80, he's handing the reins of the work days to Dyan and Wayne Griffin. Work days have been an important part of SWTU since the beginning of the chapter over 50 years. The folks who planned and supervised these days have always led us to fun, interesting days and good results for our streams. Jim raised an already high bar. During his tenure, SWTU has accomplished the greatest variety of work on the greatest variety of streams with the greatest variety of partners. That qualifies Jim as the greatest. On behalf of SWTU our most profound thanks to Jim.

But he's not disappearing. He'll plan and lead the remainder of our fall work days and help Wayne and Dyan during the transition of next spring and early summer. A nice way to thank Jim will be to attend one or more the fall sessions.

* Kevin Graeme, one of our sawyers, discovered why spraying is necessary. Someone had cut some buckthorn several years ago without treating the stumps. The result was the unpleasant, dense thicket that Kevin had to re-cut.

** A private landowner funded the work, which demonstrates that some folks have known about the Upper Yahara's trout before they were officially discovered.

Photos courtesy Dyan Lesnik. See many more in the article on swtu.org.

Remaining fall workdays – all are Saturdays from 9am to 12 noon:

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

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.)

Women's Fly Fishing Clinic Testimonial – and 2027 Registration

June 17, 2026



Wow!!! I just attended the 2026 Women's Basic Fly-Fishing Clinic in Westby, WI and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in learning about this sport, this art form and this pathway to the beauty of the Driftless.

This is a weekend clinic organized by women, for women and as a result, it is thoughtfully organized, and beautifully executed. And the location and accommodations are wonderful for the work to be done and for the community that is built in a weekend. And more than anything, it is about the connection and the belief that we can each learn new things and build our competence and our confidence. And maybe you will even catch a fish!

We gathered Friday evening and got to meet the team of women who all attended this clinic and were so taken by their experience and by the sport, that they continue to return to share it with the newest group of participants.



Dinner was then served and the food was fantastic and plentiful and then we got to work! We broke into small groups to learn three basic knots that are important for securing flies and connecting line and we were off! It was challenging and fun and very collaborative and supportive. The vibe was wonderful and the tone was set for the whole experience. We wrapped up with a bonfire so we could have a little time to get to know each other and then called it a night - Saturday was going to be a big day!

Breakfast and coffee were ready when we woke and then we took the next steps toward the water. We learned how to assemble our fishing rods and then we again got into small groups of three participants with an instructor went outside to learn how to cast a fly rod and then we practiced. What appears easy is actually challenging and requires repetition to build muscle memory and it was fun! We knew that later we would take this practice onto the water and that would add another element of complexity.

But first, we went to learn about the entomology of the Driftless waters from Mike Miller of the WI DNR. It was engaging and interesting and we could see the incredible richness of life in these waters and it seemed that life as a trout is pretty good! And then, with Mike's expertise, we met some trout and they are beautiful!

Back to the base to have a little break, to make sure we were all properly outfitted and to pack our sack dinners to take on the water and most importantly, to meet our river buddies as each participant would go out on the river with their own teacher and guide – a brilliant way to put us each at ease and to give us close guidance and support as we cast our first fly onto the water. It was here that I had a revelation. Yes, this was challenging and yes, there was so much to learn about technique, about water, about light, about bugs, about fish and about how to connect and adapt to all of these dynamic elements while on the river. And above it all, I was standing in a beautiful little river surrounded by the sound of the water, and the birds and cows and horses nearby, and it was sublime. Not because I actually did catch a little trout.

Because I did something new, and met some amazing people, and spent time with a friend, and got to drink in the beauty of the Driftless and to feel completely present and grateful for the opportunity.

It is about the journey and I invite you to join!

~ Joanne (see more great photos on swtu.org)

Clinics fill fast. SWTU members have first notice. Please do not wait. We fill every year quickly. To sign up for this 3 day all-inclusive clinic visit Southern WI Trout Unlimited Clinics Page here: https://www.swtu.org/learn/womens-flyfishing-clinic/. The clinic is run by volunteers and the price is kept very low to be as inclusive as possible. Despite the low fee for the incredible value, we understand that some individuals may need a price break. We offer a limited number of scholarships per year. If you'd like a scholarship, please email wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com. The $375.00 fee includes e days of lodging, meals, snacks, loaner gear (do not go out and buy anything), Instruction and guided fishing. We are unable to offer refunds.

Vets on the Fly Activities – Fly Tying Fall and Winter 2026

By Dyan Lesnik

On WEDNESDAY November 4th we will be tying Dave Pinczkowski's Bad Hair Day! We will go over where the pattern comes from and its many variations. It can be a quick, simple fly or an advanced tie. This season we will be tying on **Wednesdays** 5:30pm at the VFW Post 1318. Arrive early and have dinner at the Post or just tell some fish stories.

These classes are for all levels. Never any cost. Stop out when you can as you can start anytime. No requirement to attend them all. All gear is provided. You are very welcome to bring a family member as well. Learn more on our Facebook site or contact Dyan Lesnik (dmlgriffin@gmail.com) for more info.

Welcome New Members

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

Michael Losenegger
Joshua Wingard
Matt Brockdorf

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

Are you an aspiring trout bum? If so, load up the van, crank up the tunes, and head for western Montana, where snowcapped mountains punctuate lush valleys through which flow some of the world's most famous trout rivers. West Yellowstone would be a good destination, as it is perhaps the most trout friendly town in America. West Yellowstone is gateway to Yellowstone National Park, but it is also ground zero for some of the finest trout fishing on the planet. Fabled rivers such as the Madison, Gallatin, Firehole, Gibbon, Yellowstone, Henry's Fork, and Snake are within an hour's drive. West Yellowstone began its climb to Trout Town, USA on June 11 1908, when a Union Pacific train pulled into town for the first time on newly constructed tracks. "West", as locals call it, consisted of one hotel and two general stores at the time, but the railroad brought thousands of tourists to the doorstep of Yellowstone. The town grew quickly, and it was soon a bustling tourist and recreational destination.

Trout fishing opportunities near West Yellowstone are extraordinary. The town today sports six world-class fly shops, and four more are but a short drive away. These dedicated fly shops all follow in the footsteps of Don Martinez, who opened in 1932 the first shop in West Yellowstone devoted exclusively to fishing. Martinez was one of the Rocky Mountains' earliest fly-fishing luminaries that had widespread national influence. George Grant, probably Montana's most famous historic fly tyer, described Martinez as "*an exceptional fly tier, a skillful fly fisherman, and an individual who loved our great rivers and wanted to preserve them for others.*" Martinez was a colorful character about whom we know far too little. The early days of fly angling in the American West were simply not chronicled as thoroughly as were those in the East.

Martinez spent winter months in Los Angeles, where he ran a successful mail-order fly-tying business. He spent summers in West Yellowstone, where he fished and ran his fly shop. He was a dedicated entomologist who studied insects of the Yellowstone area, designed and tied flies to match, and sold them in the West Yellowstone shop. That winning combination made Martinez a leading figure in the development of western fly fishing, especially that of the Yellowstone area. Martinez sold his shop in 1943 but it has persisted through the decades under several new ownerships as Bud Lilly's Trout Shop (1952-2016) and Big Sky Anglers (2016-present).

Martinez was a fly fishing impressionist, not an imitationist, and his philosophy of fly design was "*keep it simple*". His flies combined first-hand knowledge of western insects with suggestive general fly designs. Martinez designed many innovative flies, but only a few persist today. His most notable flies are the modern Woolly Worm, Martinez Black Nymph, Red Squirrel Tail, and Bloody Butcher.

The Woolly Worm was Martinez' favorite fly, although he did not design the original. Martinez knew of the Woolly Worm as a bass fly from Arkansas, but he adapted it as a general attractor wet fly for trout. Martinez popularized the fly so widely that his name is indelibly associated with the fly. Martinez once described the Woolly Worm as "*a horrible looking grub*", but one whose fish-catching abilities are so good that its appearance must be overlooked. Remarkably, a Woolly Worm's basic design dates to the earliest days of recorded fly angling. It is very similar to Thomas Barker's 'Palmer Flie', which he described in *The Art of Angling* (1651). The Palmer Flie is especially historic, because it was the very first artificial fly in the angling literature for which both the appearance of the finished fly and explicit tying instructions were provided to a reader. Woolly Worms, Woolly Buggers, Bivisibles, and English Bumbles all descend from Barker's Palmer Flie.

Fish a Woolly Worm slowly and deeply with occasional twitches. Breathing movements of the hackle as the fly swirls in currents are key to its success. Authors have debated for centuries what Palmer-style flies imitate, but the only consistent conclusion is that they are topnotch fish catchers.

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---------- Woolly Worm ----------

Martinez wrapped the Woolly Worm hackle with the dull (concave) side of the feather facing forward toward the hook eye, but many anglers today prefer to wrap with the shiny (convex) side facing forward.

Hook: 2X- or 3X-long nymph hook, #4 - #14
Thread: Black, 6/0 or 8/0
Tail: Scarlet red wool yarn or hen hackle feather barbs
Hackle: Grizzly hen, palmered the full length of the hook shank
Body: Black chenille



Stay Connected

Know what's happening by connecting to our Chapter Calendar!

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.)

SWTU's Instagram account is a great place for interesting news, facts and photos.

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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