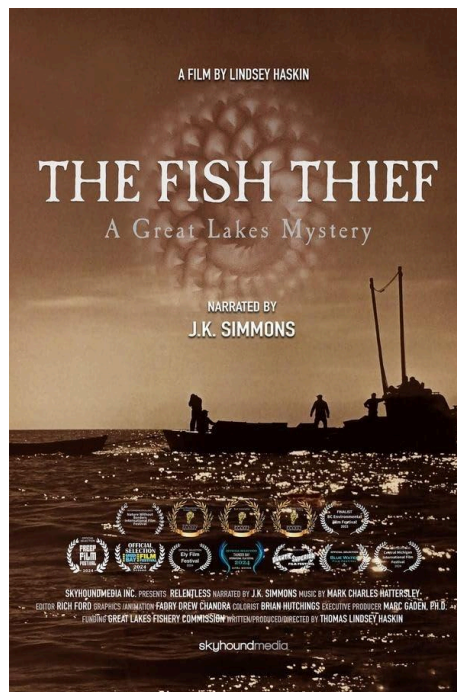


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President's Message / Chapter Fishing Outings & Events

Please join us at our next monthly chapter meeting at [Village Pizza & Pub](#) (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110 location) on Thursday, March 20th, 2025 with happy hour starting at 6:00 PM.



For this month's program we will be screening [*The Fish Thief: A Great Lakes Mystery*](#) under special permission from the film's distributor. This movie documents the gripping tale of why the most prized fish in the largest freshwater ecosystem on Earth nearly vanished, and the remarkable people who tackled the mystery. We will also hear a report from chapter members who attended the recently concluded TU Driftless Science Symposium. If you have friends and/or family members who might be interested in participating, bring them along as your guest, and be sure to include them when you R.S.V.P. if they will be partaking in the pizza buffet. You can [R.S.V.P. here](#). There will also be prize-drawings! Tickets will be available to purchase at \$5.00 each. Books will also be available for sale. Consider joining us even if you live further out, tollway access is convenient.

On March 13th the chapter held a short-term strategic planning meeting. Those participating helped develop the following proposed resolutions (which the board will discuss adopting at its next meeting): 1) Increase operational and chapter program efficiencies; 2) Implement a more organized committee structure with well-defined committee jobs and spread jobs across a greater number of volunteers; 3) Strive to better engage existing inactive members; 4) Implement/improve officer succession planning; and, 5) In the future, develop a long-term strategic plan. Work towards implementing proposed resolutions 1 & 2 commenced during the meeting, and three members, Jonathan Culli, Ken Bruckner, and Marty Jandura offered, if so elected, to take on the positions of

president, vice-president, and treasurer, respectively. Scott Lammers has offered to stay on as secretary. Others in attendance volunteered to take on other committee positions and jobs. Thanks to all who participated and stepped up. There are still more job roles to fill, the chapter needs additional volunteers to maintain its positive trajectory. A list of chapter committees and jobs can be found [here](#). Please email prez@leewulfftu.org if you'd like further information and/or are willing to help. Many hands make light work.

Dust off your fishing gear! The early catch-and-release [Illinois spring trout season](#) opens Saturday, March 22, 2025. Several LWTU members plan to fish [Pine Creek at White Pines State Forest Park](#) on 3/22 starting late morning. If you are interested in participating all you need to do is show up (with gear of some sort ideally) and participate, weather permitting. Member and vice-president Jerry Sapp plans to be there and will have squirmy wormy flies (which tend to work quite well) on-hand for sale at \$1 apiece with proceeds benefitting the chapter (thanks Jerry!) Our friends from [Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing](#) (PHWFF) and some of their clients may also be onsite on 3/22, adding to the merriment.

The early catch-and-release trout season opened on January 6th on most Wisconsin inland streams ([click here for details](#)). The [Iowa trout fishing](#) season remains open all year.

And the great lake tributaries present an opportunity for big chinook, coho, steelhead, and brown trout. Rain drives fish into the tributaries so you might need to wait until the weather warms up...be mindful of [water flows](#) and do not wade if levels are unsafe. Do not hesitate to ask fellow chapter members for tips at our monthly meetings. Also, the following DNR resources offer helpful tributary fishing information: [Wisconsin](#), [Michigan](#), [Indiana](#).



Milwaukee River

If you fish in cold weather, be sure not to remove trout from water when air temperatures are below freezing as this can damage gills and kill the fish.

In 2025 the chapter will again host several fishing outings and participate in an exchange with the West Denver Trout Unlimited chapter. Click [here](#) for the latest details about our planned 2025 outings, and contact our outings coordinator at outings@leewulfftu.org A.S.A.P. to secure your spot. As always, newcomers are welcome, and we will pair you up with a more experienced angler upon request to provide guidance on fishing locations, tactics and fly selection. During our early spring outing, the chapter plans to repair and upgrade additional stiles, as well as install one or more new stiles, enhancing our [extensive network of existing stiles](#) (where there are [stiles](#), generally there are fish).



Driftless Area Stile Installed by LWTU Members

Our Trout-in-the-Classroom (TIC) program is ongoing with two schools participating in the 2024/2025 season, including returning Crystal Lake's North Elementary and newcomer Elgin Math and Science Academy (EMSA). Our program is again rearing brook trout, unique to our chapter in Illinois (other Illinois TU TIC programs raise rainbow trout). Unfortunately EMSA suffered a near-total loss of its fish due to a filter-related mishap which was no fault of their own. EMSA will still participate in the release, which has been scheduled for May 19th. Many thanks to our TIC volunteers and schools!



May 2024 LWTU TIC Release Day at Fox Bluff

We are still working to re-activate the chapter's Fishin' So Fly program in 2025 with long-standing partner teacher Beth Harner! This program typically involves 2-4 evenings of fly fishing with students at [Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation](#) in late spring. Stay tuned for details. Special thanks to member Bob Meschewski for cultivating these plans.

Upcoming LWTU events (volunteers needed):

- [MCCD Tying Flies with Trout Unlimited](#) at [Prairieview Education Center](#) in Crystal Lake, IL - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Wednesday, April 9
- LWTU [Fox Bluff](#) ponds cleanup workday - Saturday, April 12

- Chauncey H. Duker School Event in McHenry, IL - Monday, May 12th or Tuesday, May 13th (in partnership with GBTU)
- MCCD kids casting and fishing event at [Fel-Pro RRR](#) in Cary, IL - Friday, May 9
- TIC fish release at [Fox Bluff](#), Monday, May 19th

Please email volunteer@leewulfftu.org if you are interested in participating in any of the above programs, events, or workdays.

The WI DNR tree-planting program designed to help mitigate [the effects of climate change on coldwater fisheries](#) is progressing. SWTU has set 2025 spring dates to clear brush and plant seedlings along streams in Wisconsin, see the non-chapter events section further below for details.

Watch your email for Evite invitations to meetings, events, etc. I hope to see all of you in-person at our next meeting. The February meeting will not be available via Zoom.

Be sure to check out our book exchange program available at in-person chapter meetings. Purchase books for as little as \$5, and optionally return them after reading for a \$3 exchange credit.

Feel free to email any speaker suggestions to speakers@leewulfftu.org.

Please track your volunteer hours and report volunteer hours to the chapter treasurer by 4/10/2025 at treasurer@leewulfftu.org.

The chapter is seeking volunteers to get involved in several committees, and to take on select club duties. Please email me at prez@leewulfftu.org if you'd like further information or are willing to volunteer. Thank you to those of you who are already volunteering.

Be sure to check out Bob Olach's Fly of the Month and Kurt Haberl's Grumpy's Page contributions this month further below.

Tight lines,

Brent Burval



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!
Prevent the spread of invasive species. It's the Law!

WATER USERS: Do your part to protect WI waters!

Before entering and leaving here **YOU MUST**

- ✓ **INSPECT** all equipment, including boots & waders
- ✓ **REMOVE** all plants, animals & mud
- ✓ **DRAIN** all water from footwear, equipment and gear
- ✓ **NEVER MOVE** live fish, bugs & snails

When possible, use rubber-soled footwear and scrub ALL gear clean with a brush.



When moving between bodies of water while fishing please be extra diligent in cleaning and drying your gear. Read [this recent press release about *Previously Undetected Parasite Discovered In Wild Wisconsin Trout*](#) to learn more about why this is so important.



TU Impacted by US Department of Government Efficiency

On March 4th, TU leaders hosted an urgent Town Hall meeting to help spread the word that US DOGE actions have already hit TU hard. Some highlights shared during the meeting:

- TU restoration projects across the country, including the [Driftless Area](#), rely heavily on government funding, with a government-to-private funding ratio of approximately 4-to-1.
- TU recently suffered unprecedented delays in receiving promised payments (~\$17 million) from government agencies for completed and ongoing TU restoration work.
- Up to \$180 million of promised future government funding (including [TU Driftless Area Restoration Effort](#) funding) for TU projects is now paused and in question, forcing TU to put many major current and planned restoration projects on hold. While not a TU project, here is a paused conservation project that hits close to home, resulting in major negative impacts to our Great Lakes fisheries: ["Asian Carp barrier project on Des Plaines River delayed as federal funds hang in limbo"](#) (*WGN News video*)
- TU restoration work up until this current government funding pause has provided roughly 2,500 family-wage jobs across the US each year (staff and contractors), primarily in rural areas, and many of these jobs are now in jeopardy.

Now, possibly more than ever, is the time for TU members, friends, and family to stand up and take action. Here's what one can do to help:

1. Contact your members of congress today, quickly and easily, using [this TU online action tool](#).

2. Make a [special donation](#) to TU national. With government funding paused, your special donation will help sustain vital core TU operations and staff.
3. Get more involved locally at the grassroots level by volunteering for the Lee Wulff chapter (email volunteer@leewulfftu.org).

You can learn more about the impacts of the US DOGE on TU projects [here](#).

Soil and Water Conservation District Funding Slashed

The 103rd General Assembly of Illinois has finalized the FY25 budget. Sadly, this budget was signed into law with a roughly 48% decrease in Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) operational funding. Illinois' 97 SWCDs experienced a substantial funding shortfall in the FY 2025 state budget. SWCD operations funding was reduced by \$4 million from \$8.5 million in FY 24 to \$4.5 million in FY 25. The shortfall will lead to the loss of trained and qualified Soil and Water Conservation District employees which will take years of training to replace. Without sufficient funding, employees, much like unprotected soil, will erode away. Help petition to restore state funding [here](#).

Help Pass Good Samaritan Legislation

Done and done! [Signed into law](#) in-part thanks to incredible support from TU and its members!

Protect Illinois Wetlands

The U.S. Supreme Court recently gutted the Clean Water Act, eliminating the protection of many wetlands we rely on for flood control and habitat along major rivers. Now, Illinois wetlands are left vulnerable to developer bulldozers because our state lacks a comprehensive program to protect them. Wetlands act as nature's sponges, improving water quality, providing important flood control, and preserving endangered habitats. Illinois has already lost nearly 90% of our wetlands. In our warming climate and increasing extreme weather, we can't afford to lose any more. Consider asking your legislators to support state legislation that would help protect Illinois wetlands left vulnerable by the US Supreme Court by filling out [this form](#). ([HB5386](#), 103rd G.A.)

Illinois House Bill 1873 Water Recreation Rights

As an angler, you know that the many beautiful streams in Illinois could be much greater recreational assets than they now are. Those streams could provide some of those same memorable, on the water experiences that are available to our neighbors in Wisconsin and Michigan just outside their back-doors. An Illinois Supreme Court decision recently called on the state legislature to reassert the public right to use state waters. The idea is to pass a new law clarifying and modernizing existing rights for river access. [HB1873](#) (104th G.A.) is the legislation that can get this done. Your help is needed to tell your legislators to support this much needed legislation. Please do it now. [Click here to easily take action in under a minute of your time.](#)

Save the Kish

Despite much opposition, the Woodstock City Council recently approved all of the preliminary measures that will allow the Lennar Riverwoods proposed high-density development along the banks of the Kishwaukee River in Woodstock to go forward. Follow this situation [here](#). But it's not over until it's over. Voice any opposition you may have by emailing the Woodstock City Council at citycouncil@woodstockil.gov and [signing this petition](#).

Additional Action Links

Trout Unlimited is not just about trout angling. [The national founders committed to conservation and preservation when they incorporated in 1959](#). In this spirit, please consider taking a few minutes to explore additional ways to take action:

<https://standup.tu.org/> & <https://www.tu.org/conservation/action-center/>

Bob Olach's Fly of the Month

Yellow & Black Winged Spider



For some reason (probably because they catch a lot of trout), I've been tying quite a few flies with a black body and with different ribbings, tails, hackles, etc.

In going through my fly tying materials this week, I found some hen hackles that I had dyed with turmeric (originally white hen hackles) to make some pale yellow hackles for Yellow Spiders. In addition, in my box of salmon fly tying materials, I found a bag of yellow saddle hackles plus a full dyed hen skin from Cookshill. Also saw a small bag of Guinea fowl feathers that I bought from Bass Pro over 20+ years ago but never used.

Figured, I'd try to combine these materials to make another, small "black bodied" fly, as follows:

DRESSING

- Hook:** Daiichi #1550 Wet Fly Hook - size 12
Thread: Black YLI 100 silk or Black Danville / UNI threads
Body; Thread color
Rib: Small silver wire
Tail: Small, fuzzy tuft of feather at the bottom of a hen hackle feather
Hackle: Dyed yellow hen feather
Wing: Approx. 1/4"+ of a black, spotted Guinea fowl feather, bunched & rolled.



Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl

The day started with the usual donuts and coffee. Then things got weird. Schnoz, Ghost Mary and I headed out to the magical pool we inherited from Old Ben Waverly with strict rules about only fishing a zebra midge and after we hooked Old Ben, the giant brown that ruled the pool, we were to salute him, and then head out. More often than not, one of us hooked the great fish and he either ran directly at us and got off or turned downstream and broke our most stout tippet. The last time out, probably two years ago, we saw no fish at all in the pool, so this year, we made our way through Old Ben's complex directions with some trepidation. Would Old Ben be back? Would there be any fish at all?

Ghost Mary and I were somewhat unnerved by a random song that came on the radio in Schnoz's hearse that had become his fish mobile, although Schnoz was completely oblivious, and a look from Mary telegraphed, "Should we say anything to Schnoz?" I just shrugged. I didn't know. The song was "Ripple" with lyrics by Robert Hunter and recorded by the Grateful Dead, a song well worth playing again and again.

*If my words did glow with the gold of sunshine
And my tunes were played on the harp unstrung
Would you hear my voice come through the music?
Would you hold it near as it were your own?
It's a hand-me-down, the thoughts are broken
Perhaps they're better left unsung
I don't know, don't really care
Let there be songs to fill the air
Ripple in still water
When there is no pebble tossed
Nor wind to blow
Reach out your hand, if your cup be empty
If your cup is full, may it be again
Let it be known there is a fountain
That was not made by the hands of men
There is a road, no simple highway
Between the dawn and the dark of night
And if you go, no one may follow
That path is for your steps alone
Ripple in still water
When there is no pebble tossed
Nor wind to blow
You who choose to lead must follow
But if you fall you fall alone
If you should stand then who's to guide you?
If I knew the way I would take you home.*

Two donuts each and one coffee later, Schnoz's hearse came to the pulloff near Old Ben's secret pool. Anyone who didn't know that the overgrown single lane was there would never find it. Before we got out, I read the oath we took in honor of Old Ben's gift of this secret fishing spot and all three of us swore to our agreement. It was Ghost Mary's turn to fish the pool, so she put on her waders and rigged her rod. With a great flourish, Schnoz pulled a long-handled landing net out of the back of his fish mobile, something more appropriate for landing Chinook salmon hooked while trolling Lake Michigan in a charter boat.

"The oath doesn't say anything about the landing net," Schnoz noted, "so I've come prepared."

"Schnoz, you do remember the last time we were here? We didn't catch anything," I said.

"I have a short memory," Schnoz said. "Actually, I remember nothing, at least nothing bad. It's a skill I learned over many years when unfortunate things happened to me, you know, things I chose that didn't work out as planned."

"I remember them all," I said. "Anytime you want to refresh your memory, just let me know."

Mary chuckled, and then grew suddenly quiet. "Hm," she said a few moments later.

"What is it?" I said.

"Well, guys, I know spring seems to be a little late this year, and the trees aren't even budding yet, but just listen."

We did, and Schnoz said, "I don't hear anything. What am I listening for?"

"Birds," Mary said. "There aren't any birds. No sand hill cranes heading north, no geese, no red wing blackbirds building nests in the reeds, no cardinals, no robins, not even a sparrow chasing another sparrow."

"Maybe the birds know who we are," Schnoz said. "I'd probably stay away from us too."

We laughed at that, but it still seemed odd. Some years we had to jog to Old Ben's pool with our hands over our heads for protection against very angry red wing blackbirds.

Mary had slipped into her waders more quickly than Schnoz or I could and tied on a zebra midge with the sure fingers of a guide. We shuffled through the weeds where we knew there used to be a path past a small, overgrown spring to the pool and the tall, rocky ledge that hid the pool from the road. The pool looked like it always did with its darkest, deepest water near the limestone cliff, a sandy beach at the top of the pool,

and a rocky riffle at the bottom before the stream wandered off into overgrown bushes and willows.

All three of us studied the water but we didn't see anything, not even a minnow.

"I think I'm going to go down to the riffle and cast upstream," Mary said. "I put on a long leader, and that would be a bit less obvious to fish."

We watched as Mary skirted the pool, and slipped into its lower end without so much as a ripple. I watched her false cast a couple of times to lengthen her line and then send a graceful cast to the top of the pool. Mary had always been skillful about fishing tight lines, so there was no strike indicator for us to watch, only the slow drift of the end of her fly line. Halfway through the drift and close to the bluff, we saw her line go tight.

"Yes!" Schnoz shouted as Mary turned her rod downstream and made a beautiful strip strike. With the exuberance of a schoolboy on the last day of school, Schnoz raced around the pool with his tuna net and splashed into the water at Mary's off hand.

"You got him," Schnoz shouted. I looked doubtfully at the bend in Mary's rod and waited for her to confirm what I already knew.

In less than a minute, Mary brought the fish to Schnoz's outstretched net, but when Schnoz raised the net with its prize, the small trout wriggled and fell through the large squares of Schnoz's tarpon net. Mary slid her hand down the tippet till she held the fish, turned it upside down, unhooked it, and let it go.

"A healthy brown," she called. "Maybe eight inches." She freed her midge from Schnoz's net, nipped off the fly and reeled in the loose line. "Well, at least-" she called and then stopped mid-sentence. I saw her head suddenly stop as she looked to the top of the rock ledge and shielded her eyes from the morning sun. There was an old guy up there, forty feet above us, sitting on a downed trunk which had snapped two feet from the ground. He fingered a stick, testing its supple bend, than tapped it three times against his calf. He wore work khakis and a heavy shirt the color of the tree trunk. I wouldn't have noticed him at all except for the battered, floppy hat which hid most of his face. It was almost white, and from that high angle looked more like a halo than a hat.

"What?" Schnoz said to Mary, and then he froze too, as the man rose from his log and disappeared back into the brush behind the ledge. I looked at Mary, who seemed as surprised as we were. When I looked toward her, the pool was as dark and still as if its top layer was ice, solid and glassy. Then it happened. A ripple from the middle in a perfect circle spread out as if someone had tossed a rock into the pool. But there had been no rock. The single ripple spread out until it reached Mary and Schnoz and then dissipated.

In a minute they left the pool and joined me at the beach.

“You didn’t catch Old Ben,” Schnoz said with disappointment.

“Maybe I did,” Mary said. “Maybe he’s the next Old Ben.”

“That sounds good to me,” I said. “But I thought our pool was secret.”

“Maybe it still is,” Mary said.

“That’s the thing,” I said. “The older I get, the more I keep saying ‘maybe’ about things, more and more things. Going fishing is like one big *maybe*.”

“That guy,” Schnoz said. “I don’t think I will forget about that guy checking up on us. Do you think he knew about the pool from Old Ben?”

“Maybe,” Ghost Mary said. “Maybe. It’s a hand-me-down.”

We walked slowly, thoughtfully back to the hearse, each of us pausing a time or two to look back and see if the old man appeared on the cliff above the pool. By the time we got back to the car, it felt like Schnoz’s memory filtering mode was trying to kick in, and I wasn’t sure what we had seen. The pool hadn’t changed. I knew that. Somehow, we had.

Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- [Fox Bluff](#) workdays hosted by MCCD Site Steward, Matt Tegelman, 9:00 AM - Noon (email mtegelman@yahoo.com to R.S.V.P. yes):
 - April 26, 2025
 - May 17th, 2025
- SWTU 2025 Spring Workdays (email jimhess5599@gmail.com to R.S.V.P. yes – detailed information for each workday will be sent out prior to the event to those who R.S.V.P.)
 - April 5 (9am – 12 noon)– Duerst Property, Sugar River. Dane County recently purchased this 625-acre property, located at 7309 Riverside Rd. We are working with James Brodzeller, Dane County Watershed Coordinator. We recently applied and received a grant through TUDARE for a STIHL workday at this property. STIHL will provide 10 professional chainsaw sawyers for a full workday next fall clearing large box elders that are encroaching the river. This workday will focus on clearing invasive honeysuckles and other invasive shrubs so the STIHL crew can focus on the box elders.
 - Tuesday, April 22 (1:00pm – 2:30pm) - Gordon Creek. This will be an Earth Day Event. Students from Hollandale Elementary will be helping us plant swamp white oak trees. The trees will be about 6 feet tall and the DNR will pre-drill the holes. This is a DNR easement upstream of the bridge at County Rd A. Justin Haglund, DNR Fish Biologists, has contacted the landowner, who is very excited and has agreed to water the trees. The DNR will also perform a stream survey for the kids. This workday is being funded by The Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin. After this event, we will also plant a few trees on Kittleson Creek along Cty Rd H. Replacing dead trees that we previously planted. We will need to dig these holes.
 - April 26 (9am – 12 noon) - Conley Lewis. This will be a joint workday with the Nohr Chapter, removing large box elders. Same location as last fall. Working with Justin Haglund and his crew.

- May 10 (9am – 12 noon) - Kittleson Creek along Cty Rd H just south of the intersection of Cty Rd A and H. Removing willows and clearing a large stand of honeysuckles. We are coordinating with James Brodzeller, Dane County.
 - May 17 (9am – 12 noon) - Big Spring DNR tree planting. Justin Haglund and his crew will be leading this workday. The DNR will predrill the holes and provide fencing and t-posts. The Nohr Chapter has another event that day, but are still planning to send some volunteers. So, we need a big turnout. This site is where we have had several workdays in the past 2 years clearing out willows so we can plant these trees.
 - May 24 (9am – 12 noon) – Duerst Property, same as April 5
 - June 7 (9am – 12 noon) - Kittleson Creek or continue working on the Duerst Property if needed.
- [2025 TU Annual Members Meeting and CX3 Event](#) - St. Paul, MN - September 24-28, 2025
 - [IF4](#) screenings in the region:
 - The Park Center, U.S. 63, Hayward, WI - April 5, 2025
 - [Hotel Winneshiek, East Water Street, Decorah, IA](#) - April 26, 2025
 - [Starlite 14 Drive In, Richland Center, WI](#) - June 6, 2025
 - [Fly Fishing Film Tour](#) (F3T) screenings in the region:
 - [Barrymore Theatre, Madison, WI](#) - March 21, 2025
 - [The Olympic South Side Theater, Cedar Rapids, IA](#) - March 30, 2025
 - [Davis Theater, Chicago, IL](#) - April 1, 2025
 - [Gorton Center, Lake Forest, IL](#) - 1:00 PM, April 6, 2025

- [Gorton Center, Lake Forest, IL](#) - 4:00 PM, April 6, 2025
- [Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts, Gary, IN](#) - 1:00 PM, May 3, 2025
- [Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts, Gary, IN](#) - 6:00 PM, May 3, 2025
- Park Falls, WI - TBD

- *Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing* (PHWFF) - Ongoing (click [here](#) to get involved)
- *Fly tying with [NIFTY](#)*
- Illinois RiverWatch training sessions (click [here](#) for schedule)

Chapter Officers

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Secretary: Scott Lammers
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Treasurer: Jerry Ward
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Join Trout Unlimited



When joining Trout Unlimited (TU) at the national level, TU automatically assigns you to a local chapter based on your Zip Code and [this chapter boundaries map](#).

If not already a TU member, [click here to join TU for as little as \\$17.50 for your first year](#).

Already a TU member but not assigned to the Lee Wulff chapter? Call TU customer service at 1-800-834-2419 and make the switch to the Lee Wulff chapter (#448) today!