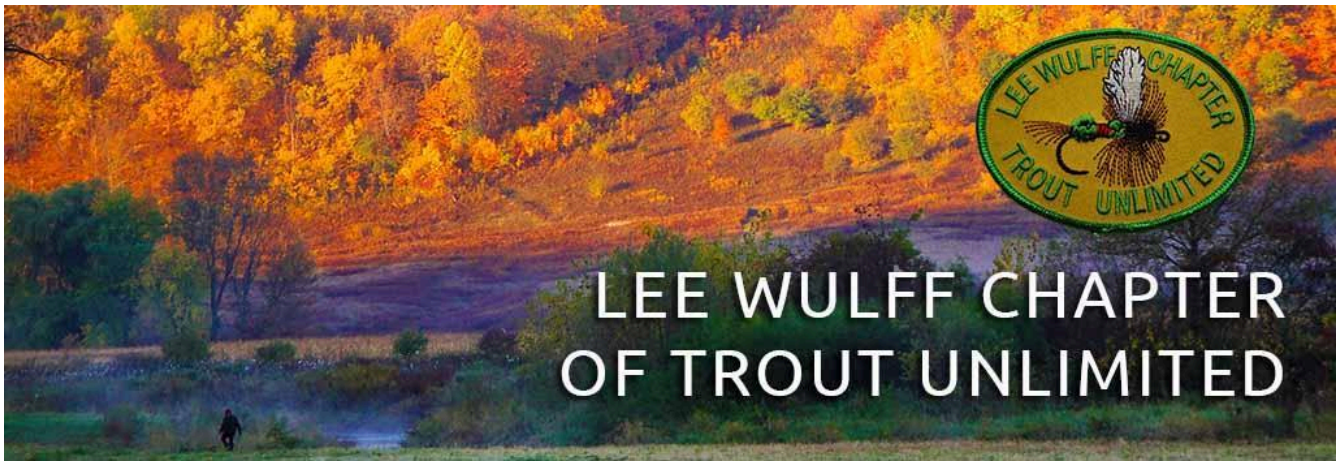

In This November 2026 Issue

- President's Message & Upcoming Chapter Events
- Holiday Banquet
- Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl
- Action Center
- Upcoming Non-Chapter Events
- Chapter Officer Listing
- Join Trout Unlimited

President's Message & Upcoming Chapter Events

Greetings fellow LWTU members,

Our **November Monthly Meetup** will take place at Village Pizza & Pub (145 N John F. Kennedy Dr, Carpentersville, IL 60110) on Thursday, November 19th, 2026. Our program will feature **Greg Schmitt** and **Cameron Aker**. Greg is the Eastern Iowa Community Engagement Coordinator for Iowa Natural History Foundation and Cameron is the Driftless Area Community Engagement Coordinator for TUDARE. They will discuss the **ongoing stream restoration work in Iowa** and touch specifically on the Spring Branch project near Manchester.

As always, social hour starts at 6:00PM Our book exchange program will once again be available at select in-person chapter meetings. Purchase books for as little as $5, and then

optionally return them after reading for a $3 exchange credit. There will also be prize-drawings! Tickets will be available to purchase at $5 each. Please consider joining us even if you live further out, tollway access is convenient.

We will hold our **Annual Holiday Banquet on Saturday, December 12**. The event will once again be hosted by Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. We're always seeking prizes for the fundraiser, so don't be shy. If you have a prize or two to donate, please contact Scott Lammers (at 1-312-206-5189 or banquet@leewulfftu.org) and plan to bring it to an upcoming chapter meeting. See details further below for information on how to purchase meal tickets online or offline; and you can even pre-purchase your bucket drawing tickets.

Last month's meetup featured a great friend of the chapter, **Jason Randall**. He presented on what to do when fishing conditions are challenging. Jason's talks are always both educational and entertaining.





The Wisconsin inland trout season may be closed, but if you need to scratch an itch, remember that **Iowa streams are open year round**. There are many stretches of public access featuring less pressure than on the Wisconsin side. We may even learn a little about where to fish during the November meetup.

It's almost time to think about **Lake Michigan tributary fishing** for big chinook, coho, steelhead, and brown trout. Rain drives fish into the tributaries, but be mindful of water flows and do not wade if levels are unsafe. If you need a few pointers, feel free to ask fellow chapter members for tips at our monthly meetings.

Friends, as we move into the holiday season, I encourage you to **reflect on what the Lee Wulff Chapter means to you**. Think about the friendships and camaraderie, the fishing outings, the meetups, and the many ways this chapter brings us together. What we share is truly special, and it is made possible by the members who step forward with their time and energy.

In the coming year, **we will need your help** to keep that tradition going. This will be Scott Lammers' final year coordinating our holiday party, and we need someone to work alongside Scott this year and take the reins next year. Finally, the next election of chapter officers will take place in April 2027, so we will need members willing to step forward and help lead the chapter. Taking on a leadership role may sound daunting, but it really doesn't have to be. We have a great support cast, so no one person takes on every task. Please think about the joy this chapter has brought you and consider giving a little of your time and talents back. We'd love to have you join us.

Upcoming Events

- November Chapter Meetup - Thursday, November 19 - Village Pizza
- Holiday Banquet - Saturday, December 12 - Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
- Winter Fly Tying - Beginning in January on Tuesday evenings - Village Pizza
- January Chapter Meetup - Thursday, January 21 - Village Pizza

Watch your email for **Evite** invitations to upcoming events. I hope to see all of you very soon.

Tight Lines!!

Jonathan Culli

December 12th Holiday Banquet & Fundraiser



On the evening of Saturday, December, 12th 2026 the Lee Wulff chapter of Trout Unlimited will be hosting its annual holiday banquet and fundraiser at Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. Proceeds help support the chapter's conservation efforts.

The banquet will feature many great prizes, a photo slideshow (please email any photos you'd like to see included to photos@leewulfftu.org), and plenty of merriment. Social hour will begin at 5 pm with dinner at 6 pm. The banquet dinner will be a buffet meal including grilled chicken / barbecued pulled pork / fried lake perch, sauteed Lyonnaise potatoes, cole slaw, corn O'Brien, McGraw aquaponics salad with ranch or balsamic dressing, dinner rolls w/ butter, and lemon pound cake with strawberries and whipped cream for dessert. Soft drinks, coffee, decaffeinated coffee, hot tea, and water are included. The cost of the meal is $70 including tip and room rental (plus $3.00 per ticket if purchased online to cover online transaction fees). There is no bar so bring your own bottle of wine, beer, or spirits if so desired.

If you need a special meal due to diet restrictions, please note that with your registration. Please register early if you wish to attend. **Seating is limited,** the event routinely sells out.

Prize tickets are available for purchase in advance and at the event. Prize ticket denominations are: 1 for $5, 5 for $20, 15 for $50, 25 for $75, and 40 for $100.

Banquet meal and prize tickets can be purchased online here (online convenience fee applies), at chapter meetings, or by check made out to "Lee Wulff TU" and mailed to the chapter treasurer or Zelle (contact treasurer@leewulfftu.org for offline ticket purchasing and Zelle payment details). Non-members are welcome to purchase tickets and attend.

If you have items you would like to donate for the fundraising portion of the event, please contact Scott Lammers at 1-312-206-5189 or banquet@leewulfftu.org. You can also bring items to chapter meetings for handoff.

Grumpy's Page by Kurt Haberl



I don't usually begin with a disclaimer, because anyone who reads this is already a generous, kind person by way of being a fly fisher, an *aficionado,* but sometimes things change. Actually things always change, especially for those of us who feel most alive in a stream, that trite philosophical metaphor for the passing of time where people come and people go, leaves fall, and fish appear or move up to headwaters to spawn rather than take our feathers and dubbing for food. Anyway, none of the events in this story are true. None. Some of the names have been changed to protect the innocent, and any resemblance to real people is merely coincidence.

At the kind invitation of the chapter president, John (not his real name) I went to the last chapter outing, and was surprised to learn that the old, quirky cast of characters had been replaced by a new gathering of characters just as quirky and lovable as the old ones.

The first thing I noticed was that sitting on a consciously rustic porch on a converted mill was just as much fun as sitting around a campfire, excerpt there was no smoke to battle, no bugs to swat, and no problem with rain diluting one's drink. I was also surprised to learn that drinking NA beer and alcohol-free wine seemed to be just as enjoyable as any of the real stuff, even though some generous fellow had left a bottle of fine bourbon on the dining room table, open to all. Who does that? Well, chapter members do that.

I was welcomed by a wonderful couple I will call Jack and Jill, (not her real name), who shared a love of fishing, each other, bamboo rods, and a knack for slow-cooked pulled pork to be shared with everyone, along with the select bourbon. They introduced me to a great teddy-bear of a man I will call Teddy Bare (not his real name) because he was wearing tights under cargo shorts.

"You're wearing tights under your shorts," I said.

"This is a wet suit," he answered.

"They look like ladies' tights," I insisted. "Not that I care."

"I have camo ones. I got tired of leaky waders, so I stared wearing a neoprene wet suit instead. If they leak, it doesn't matter. There's no space to fill with cold water. And I wear shorts over them because no one wants to see-"

“I get it,” I said and then I noticed his hoodie which read, *I suck at fly fishing.* “But what about your sweatshirt?” I said.

“I suck at fly fishing,” he said, reading his sweatshirt upside-down.

“He doesn’t,” Jack said, and winked.

“So it’s ironic?” I asked.

“No, it’s true.” Teddy Bare said.

“It isn’t,” Jill said. “He outfishes all of us most of the time.”

“Wait, I feel like I’m in the poison-drinking scene in *The Princess Bride* where Cary Elwes and Wallace Shawn argue about which cup is poison, and since they both know one is poison, Cary says he knows Wallace knows one is poison, and Wallace knows Cary knows one is poison, and Cary knows Wallace knows he knows one is poison, until finally Wallace drinks one of the cups and is poisoned.”

“Exactly,” said Jack.

“Well, no, it’s the opposite,” said Teddy Bare.

“This is going to be a great outing,” I said.

“Did you fish on the way up here?” Jack asked Teddy Bare.

“Yes. I fished one of the Bad Axe sections. I had to walk a lot-”

“It’s good you were wearing tights,” I said.

“I had to walk a lot in my wet suit and boots, but I did pretty well,” Teddy Bare said. “How about you, Grumpy?”

“Um,” I said. “Well, I caught four.”

“Good for you,” Jack said.

“Suckers,” I added., “I caught four suckers in a stream where I used to catch a lot of brookies.”

“You know,” Teddy Bare said kindly, “These streams are full of trout. It takes real skill to catch four suckers in a stream like that, I mean, four suckers in a row, that’s impressive.”

“Yeah, how did you do something that difficult in these streams?” Jack asked and winked.

I felt like I was back in the poison scene of *The Princess Bride* again. And so it went.

(Scene 2 of The Princess Bride)

The next morning we were slated to rebuild a stile so fishers could get in the pasture and cattle could not get out. The only volunteering I had done besides editing the chapter newsletter was clearing brush from a stream, which I admit I did mostly because someone usually brought donuts and I liked to stay for the bonfire after the brush was cleared. Since I knew nothing about building cattle gates, I volunteered to shuttle workers back and forth across a one-lane bridge to the pasture. Unfortunately, all the chapter members are responsible people who carpooled, drove themselves, and found parking, so I drove up and down the highway and found no one to shuttle. That meant I got to the work site after everyone was already there. A dozen people seemed like a lot to rebuild one stile, but one of the members whom I called “Liz,” (not her real name), told me everyone has a job and this crew works like a well-oiled machine.

I said, “Well, what will my job be?” and she said, “Did you ever help your dad do a project when you were a kid, and he would say, ‘Here, hold this?’”

“Yes,” I said.

“Well, that’s your job. They also serve who stand and wait until someone says, ‘Here, hold this.’”

“What’s your job?” I asked.

“I’m good at finding things,” Liz said. “Look, there are three bags of tools, two boxes of hinges, screws, and other stuff, plus there’s stuff that gets dropped in the grass. I’m the finder.”

It turned out she was very good at her job, better than an emergency room nurse with a tray of instruments. With Liz, three-inch Philips head screws appeared out of nowhere, and dropped rusty nails and pieces of old barbed wire were scooped up before anyone said anything.

When one old post was pried out of the ground and I was told, “Here, hold this,” I had finally found my calling.

“This is impressive,” I said to Liz.

“Well, here’s how it has worked,” she said. “If you want to get a good design for this kind of gate, get a dentist like Jerry (His real name, but he’s an old friend, so I don’t think he’ll sue me), to do the design and then tinker with it over the years to get the perfect

gate. He remembers the measurements, brings the new materials, and has all the tools. You see that guy sitting on the embankment looking for eagles?"

"Yeah," I said.

"That's Mork (not his real name). He's the builder and an expert on a whole lot of stuff, which he will tell you whether you want to hear it or not. The fact is, if Mork tells you to use an olive streamer somewhere and fish it with little twitches, you should do it. If he says use a # 18 Adams dry fly, you'd better do it."

"Does he know how to catch suckers?" I asked Liz. "I'm an expert."

"Mork can tell you how NOT to catch suckers. If he says something, listen. If he tells you to do something, do it."

"You're sure about this?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," Liz said.

Then I continued to hold the old rotted post and watched in awe.

First Jerry and Grant (not his real name), a young farmer and one of the family landowners, snipped away the old fence, and then Teddy Bare and Grant pulled out the last old post and gave it to another Here-hold-this worker. Then Teddy Bare and Large Tim (not his real name) jockeyed a bucking auger until their lifting and pounding had produced three-foot holes through dirt and rock for them to pound two more stiles into the bank and tamp more dirt around them. Then Mork took over, along with three more Here-hold-this workers while he measured and cut new pieces and assembled, screwed, and hinged the perfect gate. Then we all stood back and watched Grant stretch and re-attach new lengths of barbed wire. It was a thing of beauty, completed only after Mork and Large Tim sprayed the Lee Wulff logo on the new gate. Voilà.

Then we disbanded and went off to not catch fish, except for Teddy Bare, who caught more fish and came back to the porch in his tights and *I suck at fly fishing* hoodie.

I have only one other report, for the present. Besides succeeding at sucker-catching, I also am an expert on leaving my landing net at home, which required a trip to the Viroqua fly shop, where buying a landing net turned into buying a net, a magnetic net clip, various flies, a hat and hoodie, although regrettably, it did not say "*I suck at fly fishing."* I include this postscript to the story only because Jerry invited me to fish a beautiful northern stream early the next morning and allowed me access to the best runs so that I caught four browns instead of suckers (Thank you, Jerry), and in our meandering around many switchbacks, I found that a magnetic net clip was not enough to prevent a net from tangling in brush somewhere in our two mile trek along Billings Creek. I write this so that if anyone next season finds a brand new landing net on

opening day at Billings creek, it might be mine, unless you need a landing net, and then it's yours.

I also got to experience the wonder of one of Jerry's first pasture stiles at the bridge way upstream, and was told by a young fisher at the bridge that there was such a gate, but it didn't work. It turned out that years before, the assembly was done by someone other than Mork, because the word PUSH is stenciled on the gate as one leaves the stream, but that board was screwed in backwards and the PUSH sign should have been on the other side for it to work. I hope no one changes it. It's a kind of affirmation that unwanted things happen to others besides one who sometimes catches only suckers.

I can't wait for the next outing. This meager report barely scratches the surface of what wonderful things by interesting people - um - did NOT happen.

ACTION CENTER

765 Line

Two multi-billion-dollar, 765,000-volt transmission lines are proposed to cross much of southern Wisconsin including the Driftless Area from Bell Center to Genoa. Two routes are on the table, primary and alternate. Across nearly their entire length they run through cold-water trout streams and karst bedrock — because that is what the Driftless is. There is no low-impact route here. Learn more here.

Protect Public Lands

Efforts to sell, dispose, or divest public lands undermine our outdoor traditions and threaten rural economies. These lands belong to all Americans and provide vital access for hunters and anglers. Click here to take action.

Tell your Members of Congress to Pass Comprehensive Mining Reform

Congress is considering a number of policy options to streamline the permitting process for mining on public lands and provide greater certainty for the mining industry. As Congress weighs these policy options, it is imperative that legislation also includes updates to the outdated 1872 Mining Law. Currently, there are no royalties paid on hardrock minerals extracted from public lands and public land managers lack the authority to say “no” to the wrong mine in the wrong place.

A responsible path forward for domestic mining should include dedicating revenue from public lands mining to abandoned mine cleanups, as well as discretion by local public land management professionals to determine – upfront – public lands that are incompatible with mining, such as sensitive fish and wildlife habitats, community drinking water supplies, or sacred sites, for example. Comprehensive mining reform should address these issues alongside policy options for permitting new mines. Read more about balancing responsible mining and conservation. Click here to take action.

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.

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/

https://www.federalregister.gov/



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.

Upcoming Non-Chapter Events

- *International Fly Fishing Film Festival (IF4)* screenings
- *Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T)* screenings
- *Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing* (PHWFF) - Ongoing (click here to get involved)

Chapter Officers

President: **Jonathan Culli**
prez@leewulfftu.org

Vice-President: **Ken Bruckner**
viceprez@leewulfftu.org

Secretary: **Scott Lammers**
secretary@leewulfftu.org

Treasurer: **Marty Jandura**
treasurer@leewulfftu.org

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!