

Snowy Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited (SMTU)
Board Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2026
10 a.m., Lewistown Library

Present: Mike Chapman, Chad Williams, Candy Bowman, Al Eggers, Dave Ballman, Sean Strohm, Brett Shelagowski, Clint Smith, Marita Valencia.

1. Reviewed November 2021 minutes. Motion to approve by Al, seconded by Chad. Motion passed.
2. Treasurer's Report. Balance today is \$4,769.43 plus \$100 not entered yet. We received \$1,730 as a result of December's ask letter. Treasurer's report approved.

Candy provided additional information about ordering hats. She showed us the hat she ordered for herself with a simplified logo that everyone liked. Cost of hats at the "406" store is as follows: 1, \$26; 2-12, \$20 each; 13-24, \$18 each; 25-48, \$17 each; 49+, \$16 each. A consensus decision was made to order fifty hats. Half will have a mesh back ("trucker" style) and half will have fabric back. All will be adjustable. Half of each type will be navy blue and half tan. This order will cost \$800. We will sell them for \$25 each.

3. Report from Big Spring Creek Watershed Council (BSCWC), provided by Clint Smith.
 - A cleanup project has been scheduled for Saturday, April 23 (day after Earth Day) at Brewery Flats Fishing Access Site for the purpose of removing old, welded wire, fencing. SMTU and other organizations are invited to participate.
 - BSCWC is leading an effort to develop a Watershed Restoration Plan (WRP). This is an official document, approved by Department of Environmental Quality, which defines a pathway to address concerns in the watershed. A WRP has a specific format; document describing it will be provided separately. Having a WRP also opens up opportunities to obtain grant funding to conduct needed improvements. BSCWC cannot do this alone; it needs buy-in and cooperation from many stakeholders. Primary partners would be the Fergus Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service who have already expressed interest. Examples of resource concerns in the watershed are nutrient loads, riparian conditions, and water quality, particularly in some tributaries of Big Spring Creek. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was conducted in 2005 and updated in 2017. These documents would provide a starting point. Actual preparation of the WRP may be contracted out.

Related question arose regarding current effort to modify Montana's water quality standards for nitrogen, phosphorous and heavy metals as a result of action by the 2021 legislature. Numeric standards would be replaced by visual assessment of pollution. Work of DEQ's Nutrient Work Group tasked with developing the new standards is ongoing. It is generally accepted that these standards would not meet US Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) requirements. David Brooks, executive director of Montana Trout Unlimited (MTU) as well as a representative of EPA are part of the Work Group.

4. SMTU website. Marita has been communicating with Garrett Strohm who has volunteered to help us develop a website. She showed the group an initial draft of what it could look like and a proposed outline of content. What is most needed now are volunteers to write content and provide photos. All SMTU members are urged to submit photos that could be appropriate. Remember that our chapter extends to the northeast corner of Montana!
5. News from Junior High School provided by Brett Shelagowski. Last year we obtained a mini grant from MTU for Brett Shelagowski (science teacher at Junior High) to purchase fly-tying kits for students in his ecology class. The class is an elective that meets 2 or 3 times/week and includes learning about fish and entomology. Brett brought in one of the kits for us to see as well as examples of their work. Expenses for this project are ongoing and exceed the budget provided. Sean made a motion seconded by Chad to give \$200 for continued funding of this class. Passed unanimously. If others wish to donate, contact chapter treasurer Candy Bowman, brucerptpc@midrivers.com.
6. Kids' Camp at Georgetown. MTU is reinstating the week-long camp for kids age 11-14. It will be held July 10-14 and applications are due June 1. Cost is \$600 per child. SMTU will sponsor two participants. We already know of two who are interested but will still announce the opportunity in the News Argus with a local deadline of April 15. Candy will prepare the article. If we receive additional candidates, they will all be evaluated and two selected.
7. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting will be held on May 3 at 7:00 pm at the Elks Club. Our speaker will be Chris Edgington, Jefferson Watershed project Manager, MTU, who will come to speak about our local Middle Judith River restoration Project. Mike and Marita will meet with the Elks' manager to make sure all arrangements are made. There was consensus agreement to provide travel expenses to Chris. Marita will send out postcard invitations to the membership. There will also be an announcement in the News Argus. Brett will bring his students' work to display, and we will have the new hats for sale. Attendees will be invited to come at 5:30 and join us for burger bar dinner (on your own).
8. Nomination of Officers. We are due to elect officers and one board member. We discussed officers' willingness to continue in their positions. President, vice-president, and secretary would welcome replacement. After discussion of options, the following nominations were agreed on:
 - President: Pending
 - Vice-President: Dave Ballman
 - Secretary: Marita Valencia
 - Treasurer: Candy Bowman
 - Board member: Brett Shelagowski
 - Board member (to fill out Dave Ballman's term): Chad Williams

Notice of the upcoming election and the nominations will be included in the postcard invitation to the annual meeting.

9. Big Sky Journal article about SMTU member David Stuver and book he has written was noted.

Adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Submitted by Marita Valencia