



TROUT UNLIMITED DRIFTLESS AREA RESTORATION EFFORT

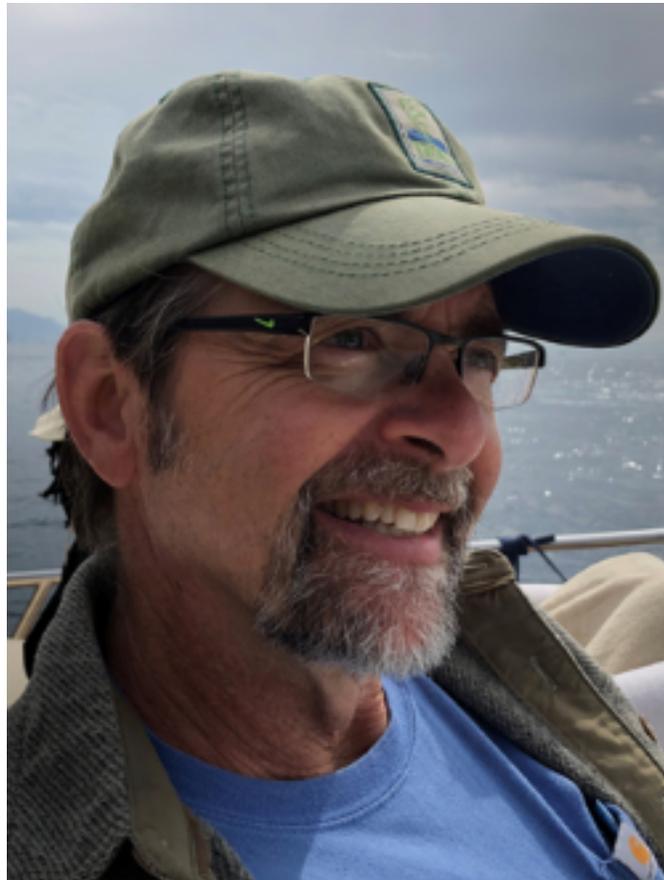
Spring 2022 Newsletter

Hello Driftless friends and hello spring! At 6:36 a.m. one morning last week I heard my first turkey gobble. Nothing says springtime to me more than an anxious gobbler calling hens.

Despite another uncertain year with Covid, we at the TU Driftless Restoration Effort Area, together with our partners, stayed the course and completed several major projects, continued to bring in additional dollars for restoration, expanded our knowledge of coldwater management, and engaged our chapters in projects and monitoring their waters.

I will be retiring at the end of this month, and we have been interviewing candidates for TUDARE's Project Manager position. I am certain that the new manager will do an excellent job of maintaining the momentum we have built with this program in the past decade-plus.

Duke Welter has also retired as our Outreach Educator but remains active working on the Kinnickinnic River dams



removal effort in River Falls. [Dustan Hoffman](#) has done a great job heading up our southeast Minnesota restoration work and continues to work with [Minnesota TU](#) Executive Director John Lenczewski to maintain and develop new projects through the Outdoor Heritage Program.

[Paul Krahn](#), TUDARE Stream Restoration Specialist, continues to work with chapters, state agencies, and county field offices on restoration work. Both Dustan and Paul will take on some additional responsibilities in 2022, engaging chapters and anglers in monitoring stream conditions in the Driftless.

Together, we are anticipating an exciting and productive year ahead.

To stay up to speed on TUDARE projects, including volunteer opportunities, please visit our [Facebook page](#). Paul Krahn can be reached at paul.krahn@tu.org, while Dustan Hoffman is available at dustan.hoffman@tu.org.



TU DRIFTLESS AREA SYMPOSIUM GOES LIVE ON FACEBOOK

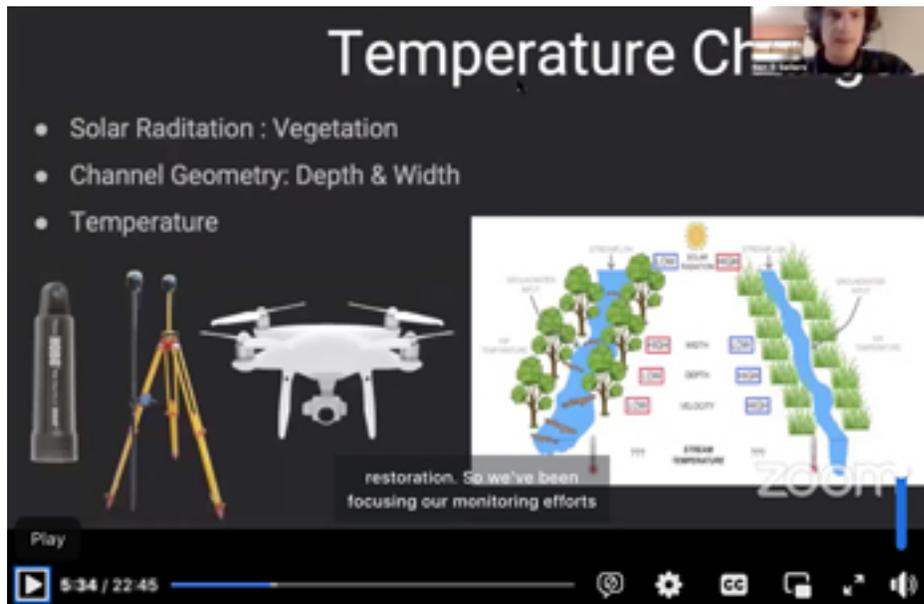
This year's Driftless Area symposium in-person event was again canceled due to Covid, but a very successful, two-day online symposium was held February 23 and March 3.

Project Manager Jeff Hastings worked with Trout Unlimited national staff – Jeff Yates, Daniel Dauwalter,

Maggie Heumann and Doug Agee — to pull off the online event, which we broadcasted live on the [TU Driftless Area Restoration Effort Facebook page](#).

More than 20 enthusiastic conservationists volunteered to present during the two-day event, which attracted more than 500 registrants.

If you were unable to catch the presentation live, the presentations were recorded and are now ready to be viewed on our Facebook page.



It was unfortunate we were not able to meet in person and network like we have in the past, but the online event and recordings opened the presentations to an even larger and broader audience. We hope that next year's symposium can be a combination of the two different formats, further expanding the reach of this excellent, educational opportunity.



STIHL CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT OF DRIFTLESS AREA CHAPTERS

For the second year in a row, [Stihl](#) Midwest has awarded a TU chapter a \$1,500 grant that can be used at a local retailer to purchase Stihl tools and/or safety projects to be used on workdays in the Driftless Area.

This year's awardee is the Coulee Region chapter.



"The goals of TUDARE and the goals of Midwest Stihl are very much aligned," said Stihl Midwest sales manager Dan Pherson.

Stihl Midwest sales managers (from as far as North Dakota) working on Bishops Branch, Coulee TU Chapter waters, winner of the 2022 grant to purchase Stihl tools for workdays.

Stihl representatives enjoyed a workday last spring working on the Kinnickinnic River with Randy Arnold and crew. This year, in early April, they met for a workday on a Coulee TU home waters. Pherson brings to the workday a group of enthusiastic Stihl representatives who provide hands-on safety training and a kick-butt attitude.

Stay tuned early next winter for information on how your chapter can apply for this generous grant from our friends at Stihl Midwest.



FREE POLLINATOR SEED FOR DRIFTLESS STREAM PROJECTS

For the past three years, the TUDARE team has been providing free pollinator seed to enhance Driftless Area streams. The seed mix is not intended to replace the planned seeding mixture, but to supplement pollinator plants into the mixture.



This is a custom mix we developed with [Prairie Moon Nursery](#) in

Southeast Minnesota and is made up of all forbs. We tried to come up with a list of plants that we thought would survive competition from grasses and the challenges of establishing perennials in the riparian area.

Over the past three years we have provided seed for 72 projects, enhancing more than 200 acres of riparian buffers.

Individuals and groups doing a stream restoration project in the Driftless Area in 2022 who would like some additional forbs to add to their mix can contact the TUDARE Project Manager and request seed.



FLOODING REQUIRES REPAIR AT DECADES-OLD BOHEMIAN VALLEY CREEK PROJECT

The Bohemian Valley Creek stream stabilization and fish habitat project is in the southeast corner of La Crosse County, Wisc. The project area covers a stream segment 1.5 miles long on a Class I trout stream.

In the late 1970s, the [Wisconsin DNR](#) did restoration work throughout this stream segment. They placed rock riprap on the eroding streambanks and installed a variety of habitat structures like wing deflectors and trout hides made of oak logs.

These practices held up very well until the August 27- 28, 2018, major flood event that dropped 6 to 10 inches of rain on the region in less than 12 hours.

A [PL-566 flood control dam](#) upstream of the site was overwhelmed, causing the dam to breach and ultimately fail. The result downstream was a massive flow of water, sediment, trees, and debris racing through the valley.

When the waters receded, the damage was catastrophic. Roads were washed out and streambanks were obliterated. Fences hung in midair and the stream in areas was rerouted.

While the earlier work by the DNR held up very well for nearly 40 years this historic flooding event severely damaged — and in many cases completely washed away — this work.



Streambanks throughout the 1.5-mile reach were stabilized with rock riprap. Trout habitat structures installed included rock weirs, bank logs, rootwads, and boulder clusters. The streambanks, as well as the floodplain, were regraded and seeded to grasses to reduce future flood damage.

The project was funded by Trout Stamp Funds and the NRCS RCPP program, with construction performed by the DNR Fisheries Construction crew. The project started in mid-May and was finally completed in early September and, once again, anglers can enjoy this first-class trout stream in a scenic Coulee region setting.

The Driftless RCPP funding, Wisconsin Trout Stamp Funds and partner collaboration made this excellent project possible. This is an example of what partnering and multi-source funding can accomplish.

2021 Habitat Improvement Projects in Southeast Minnesota's Driftless Area

[Minnesota Trout Unlimited](#) and TUDARE work closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to identify priority habitat improvement project sites to complete.

In 2021, habitat was improved on 11.2 miles of trout streams containing permanently secured angler access easements in southeast Minnesota.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service partnered with MNTU and TUDARE to help fund three in-stream habitat improvement projects at West Indian Creek, Wisel Creek, and Rush Creek. Additional funding for these projects and Invasive Vegetation Removal projects was secured through the [Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council](#), the council that administers grants provided by Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

West Indian Creek Habitat Improvement Project

The setting at West Indian Creek prior to the habitat improvement project was the typical scene we see on many of the trout streams in southeast Minnesota and the Driftless Area: High eroding banks; degraded in-stream habitat; and a riparian area tangled with leaning and falling boxelder trees with other invasive woody species intermixed.

These types of conditions can maintain healthy trout and wildlife populations. However, the long-term health and resiliency of these systems becomes more sustainable when they receive habitat projects.



West Indian Creek cottonwood hole after

One of the greatest aspects of the West Indian Creek project was giving life back to a 700-foot-long stream channel meander that was abandoned during a major rain event. Re-connecting this stream section brought back opportunity for fish, insects, wildlife, and anglers.

In all, this project spanned 11,400 feet (2.16 miles) of stream length within a permanently secured angler easement. Vertical streambanks towering 8 to 10 feet high above the water were tapered back at a 3:1 slope to reintroduce a more natural floodplain where the forces of high-water events can spread out and dissipate their energy.

Wisel Creek Habitat Improvement Project

Located in the upstream reaches of Wisel Creek's watershed, where spawning habitat is typically more abundant for trout, lay a sediment-choked project site consisting of long, wide, and flat-water pools with high vertical banks.



Wisel Creek view on top of mound

There were three exposed riffles within the project's 4,048-foot stretch of stream, but each featured short and steep aggraded riffles, meaning cobble stone had built up over time and was backing up water much like a dam.

Lowering each of those aggraded riffles, the contractor was able to manipulate the streambed gradient of the entire project reach to expose 20 additional riffles, bringing greater habitat diversity to the project site with more riffle/run/pool combinations.

The Win-Cres, Hiawatha, and Twin-Cities Chapters all combined their volunteer efforts to build lunger structures for this project, which were placed in a pool bank near the parking access, providing much desired overhead cover for trout, and great angling opportunity.

Non-game habitat was enhanced by creating three wetland scrapes for frogs and turtles, while excess soils removed from the streambanks were used to create two mounds with cut vertical faces intended to attract nesting bank swallows and belted kingfishers. Working closely with the landowners, we were able to stockpile a mound of soil removed from the streambanks that measured 30 feet high, 50 feet wide, and 120 feet long, which will be thin-spread on adjacent agricultural fields.

Rush Creek Habitat Improvement Project



Most of the excess soil removed from the high streambanks during project were mounded to create bank nesting habitat for birds

Members of the Win-Cres and Hiawatha chapters volunteered to build lunger structures.

Working with a conservation minded landowner allowed the Rush Creek habitat improvement project to expand conservation efforts beyond the trout stream.

In many Driftless Area stream corridors, it is common to see formerly grazed areas adjacent to trout streams densely overtaken by boxelder trees and invasive species like buckthorn and honeysuckle. The removal of boxelder trees and woody invasives provided the landowner with a clean slate to expand a thriving prairie they have been working to maintain.

In addition, many of the boxelder tree trunks and root-balls can be buried in the sloped stream banks to stabilize them.

Most of the excess soil removed from the high streambanks during the project were mounded to create bank nesting habitat for birds. The landowner was delighted to see wetland scrapes added to the landscape, where cut boxelder trees served as loafing logs for sun basking turtles and frogs.

The local TU Win-Cres and Hiawatha chapters volunteered their time on this project by building lunger structures. Nearly the entire group expressed their excitement of witnessing for the first time how the lunger structures they so many times built and fished were actually placed into the streambanks during project construction.



TACKLING INVASIVE VEGETATION ACROSS THE DRIFTLESS

Daley Creek



Daley Creek was among the beneficiaries of an invasive vegetation removal project.

Trout Streams in the Driftless Area have experienced numerous land use changes since European settlement. Many of the early agricultural practices broke up the roots of the once dominant and deeply rooting prairie, which later led to landslides that filled many valley floors and trout streams with mega-tons of soil that are still evident today in the form of high streambanks.

High-bank areas where grazing once existed along streams had a couple of benefits. The compaction of streambank soils sometimes helped stabilize soils, and undesirable woody species were often grazed off.

In general, high streambanks provide the perfect recipe for sedimentation issues and habitat degradation.

Where grazing has left the landscape for a few decades or more, shallow rooting boxelder trees and other woody invasive species have grown to maturity.

The sites where we have focused our Invasive Vegetation Removal projects are sites where past Minnesota Department of Natural Resources projects exist, with boxelder trees reaching the end of their lifespan and beginning to topple into the stream. Adding loose fallen trees to the previously mentioned "perfect recipe" rapidly accelerates the degradation of Driftless Area streams.

In 2021 MNTU completed 8.3 miles of Invasive Vegetation Removal habitat improvement projects along streams containing permanent angler easements. Bare soils in the project areas were seeded with a mix containing native species which root deeply and hold soil well, and the pre-existing seedbank has been flourishing in the absence of dense canopy cover.



CONWAY CREEK PROJECT

Conway creek is an unclassified coldwater stream that is a tributary to Tainter Creek in the Kickapoo River watershed in Wisconsin. This project improved nearly a third of a mile of stream by stabilizing banks with rock riprap and incorporating trout habitat throughout the stretch. The work compliments a project completed two years earlier on Tainter Creek, which flows through the same property.



Conway Creek after

The Conway Creek project was completed with financial assistance from the Driftless RCPP program, Crawford County Conservation Aids Grant, Oakbrook Chapter Embrace-A-Stream Grant, Blackhawk Friends of TU, Blackhawk Chapter, Coulee Chapter, Elliot Donnelley Chapter and [Bass Pro Shops](#) and Cabelas Outdoor Fund. Paul Krahn, Stream Restoration Specialist for TUDARE surveyed, designed and over saw installation.



TUDARE A LONGTIME FISH HABITAT PARTNER

Did you know that TUDARE was one of the first partnerships formed under the [National Fish Habitat Partnership Program](#) almost 15 years ago?

Jeff Hastings has co- managed the partnership with Louise Mauldin, a Fisheries Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Onalaska. DARE annually receives funding for the administrative work and funding for projects.

In 2021 we received funding to work with partners to enhance 2.77 miles of Swinn's Valley, Hay and Plum creeks in western Wisconsin. Also, two dams on the Wapsipinicon River in Iowa were removed and replaced with rock rapids to improve passage for priority species smallmouth bass, redhorse and a host of other native fish and mussel species.

Utilizing Fish and Wildlife Service fish passage and DARE funds, the removal of the two dams reconnected over 192 mainstem and tributary miles, eliminated public safety hazards at both dams, improved site fishing, and provided improved navigation for paddlers.

Partnership dollars target native fish (brook trout, smallmouth bass, sculpin, etc.) and are used to improve instream and riparian habitat that benefit them. Funding is also available for outreach, education, and assessments that are in line with DARE's strategic plan.

Seven new proposals were recently submitted for Fiscal Year 2023 and we'll be working with partners next fall for another round for Fiscal Year 2024.

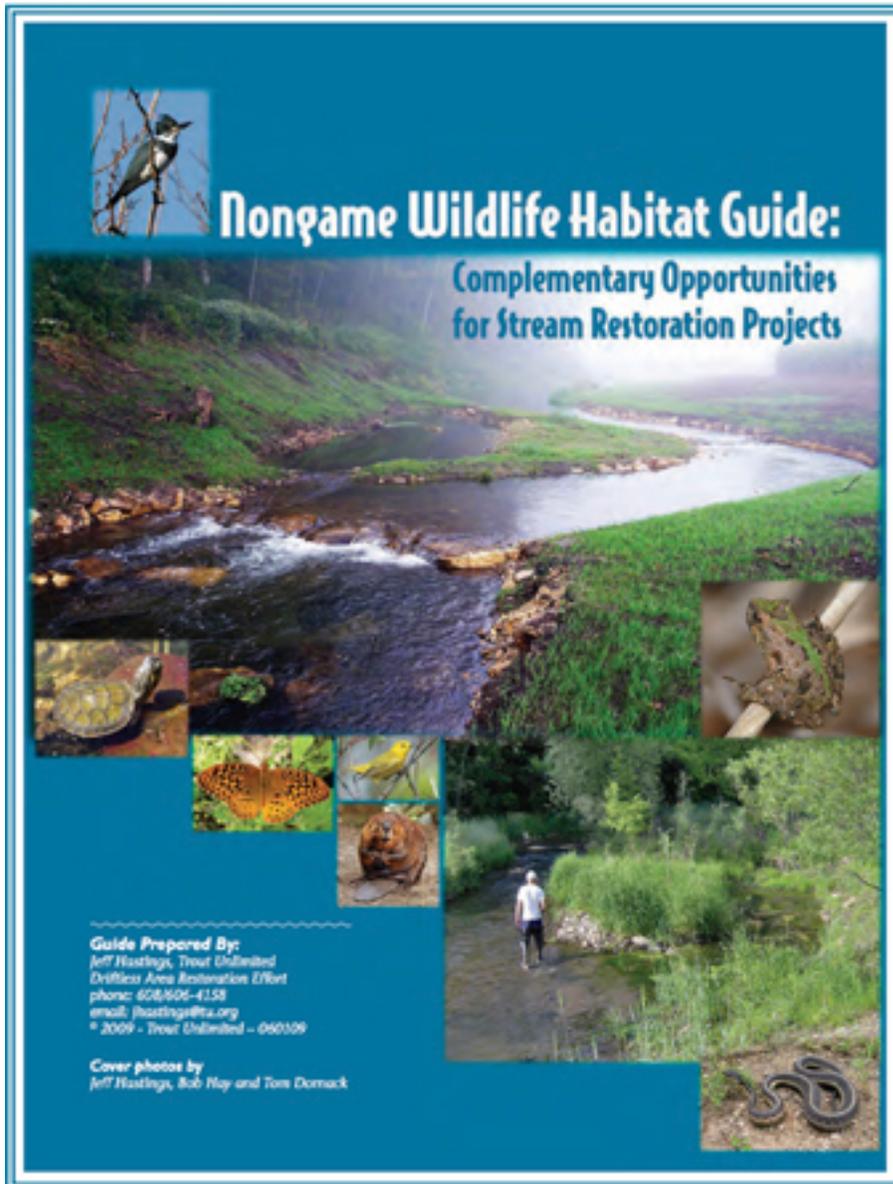
These are federal dollars and can only be used to match nonfederal dollars. The federal funding can still be used as part of the project costs if other federal dollars are involved but must be part of the nonfederal match funds.

Focus on non-game habitat continues



A high priority for the Driftless Area Restoration Effort has been to stimulate the interest in the incorporation of non-game habitat practices into stream projects throughout the region, which features some of the highest plant and animal diversity in the four-state area.

In 2009 we completed a second edition of the [Nongame Wildlife Habitat Guide](#). This guide provides information about the habitat needs of a variety of upland, riparian and wetland/aquatic non-game species and describes several specific habitat features that can benefit them.



One of the many projects in Minnesota in 2020 was on Mill Creek.

Integrating some of these features into projects, where appropriate, can make a positive contribution toward increasing the carrying capacity of instream, wetland riparian and upland habitat for nongame birds, herptiles, invertebrates, mammals, and non-game fish.

To date, hundreds of Driftless projects have gone above and beyond just stabilizing streambanks and adding habitat for trout.

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), through the Farm Bill, is commonly used to fund large portions of restoration projects.

EQIP can be used to pay for many of the elements that go into a project, including seeding, mulch, rock, earth moving, etc. Habitat

practices such as installing LUNKERS, vortex weirs and boulder clusters have been added to the list of practices for which the Natural Resources Conservation Service will contribute funding.

We have worked with NRCS in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota to also include EQIP eligible non-game habitat practices.



DRIFTLESS REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PHASE I & II



Stream restoration

Photo by Bob Micheel LCD

work is both

expensive and complicated (permits, designs, installation, etc.) and few landowners, even those that accept federal assistance, are willing or able to take on a project by themselves.

There are also a limited amount of Farm Bill dollars available in the Driftless Area to cover all the conservation needs of the landowners. County conservation field offices are often put in the position to decide which practices (waterways, dams, cover crops, etc.) will receive the limited federal assistance dollars they receive.

So, in the fall of 2015, Jeff Hastings wrote his first [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) proposal to the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The 30-plus-page proposal requested approximately \$3 million in designated Farm Bill dollars for coldwater restoration in Driftless Areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin. More than 30 cooperating partners wrote letters of support, pledging over \$12 million in matching funding for coldwater restoration.

In just two years (of what was to be a five-year program) over 90 percent of the funding was awarded to more than 150 landowners, leading to the restoration of over 35 miles of cold-water streams.

State and county agencies, TU chapters, and various conservation clubs worked with local landowners to improve their waters. The landowners signed up for the RCPP and passed those dollars onto the various organizations to cover most of the project. The chapters and state agencies then used their limited resources to cover the remaining costs of the project, allowing them to do a much larger project than would have been possible had the chapters attempted the project on their own.

The Driftless RCPP was so successful that in the fall of 2017 Hastings wrote a second RCPP proposal. This one was much larger — \$9.2 million covering the entire Driftless Area.

Over 50 conservation organizations again wrote letters of support, matching over \$12 million for coldwater restoration in the region.

Hastings admits that during the selection process he fully expected the NRCS to ask if the TUDARE program would take something far less. To his surprise he received a call from Jimmy Bramblett (Wisconsin State Conservationist) saying that the NRCS was going to award the entire \$9 million. Several hours later Hastings received a call from TU President and CEO Chris Wood congratulating the TUDARE program on what was the largest single conservation award in TUs history.

Now, several years into the second round of funding, almost all the designated coldwater dollars have been obligated. Hastings has been in close contact with the four state NRCS offices to move the remaining dollars between the states. The goal is to have over 90 percent of the second Driftless RCPP dollars obligated by this summer, because sometime this summer NRCS

is likely to offer a renewal process for projects in their last year that have obligated 90% or more of their financial assistance award.

With more than 200 projects completed, \$12 million already matched by TU partners, and over 90% of our financial assistance obligated, Hastings believes TUDARE should be in a strong position to propose another renewal of our Driftless RCPP.



STREAM RESTORATION AN OPTION FOR ADDRESSING POINT SOURCE POLLUTION

Both costs and the sometimes-complicated process of restoring streams have discouraged some landowners from implementing projects on their own in the Driftless.

We are always looking at new ways to accelerate stream restoration in the Driftless Area with an active outreach and

educational program to show landowners how the process works and find the necessary funding/partners to complete the project.



In 2022 we plan to accelerate stabilizing streambanks, incorporate fish and wildlife habitat, reduce phosphorous and sediment discharges to streams, and improve angler access and local economies by developing an outreach and education program on Wisconsin Water Quality Trading (WQT).

Water Quality Trading is a compliance option that provides point sources with the flexibility to acquire pollutant reductions from other sources in the watershed to offset their point source load to comply with a permit limit or water quality-based effluent limitation.

TUDARE plans to educate Driftless municipalities on how to implement a stream restoration project as a more cost-effective method of achieving P-reductions than upgrading their facilities. By stabilizing eroding streambanks and incorporating fish habitat, municipalities can receive phosphorous credits that will help them meet their state phosphorus standards. In fact, if they incorporate fish habitat into their projects, they will likely receive a higher phosphorous credit.

The Driftless Area is very rural with small municipalities with limited budgets that are unable to upgrade their treatment plants. Still, consulting engineering firms often recommend treatment plant upgrades as a way of meeting state phosphorous standards.

Nutrient trading has been shown to be an option that can be accomplished for about a fifth of the cost of upgrading a treatment facility. Utilizing Farm Bill dollars as part of the cost of the project will reduce projects costs even further.

Landowners will get a project at no cost. The municipality will meet their phosphorous goals. And the public and fisheries will all benefit from another restored stream.

Wisconsin has recently recognized Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) as certified to hold "nutrient credits." A municipality reduces/meets their phosphorous goals by implementing a conservation practice that ties up phosphorous and receives nutrient credits.

RES would like to work with municipalities and hold the credits. Holding the credits will require RES to develop the necessary plans, permits, design and oversee the project implementation.

Part of our vision will be to work with RES in making landowner contacts, recommending habitat practices for the project, and working with the contractor in the installation of the habitat.



**VOLUNTEERS USE [WISEH20 MOBILE APP](#) TO MONITOR
STREAM CONDITIONS**

Since 2019, Trout Unlimited anglers and water management agency staff have been monitoring stream conditions in the Driftless Area using the WiseH2O mobile application.

The program continues to allow anglers to make stream-side observations, including screening water quality, identifying stream disturbances that impact fish habitat (such as stream bank erosion, fish barriers), and providing general water conditions, including level and clarity.

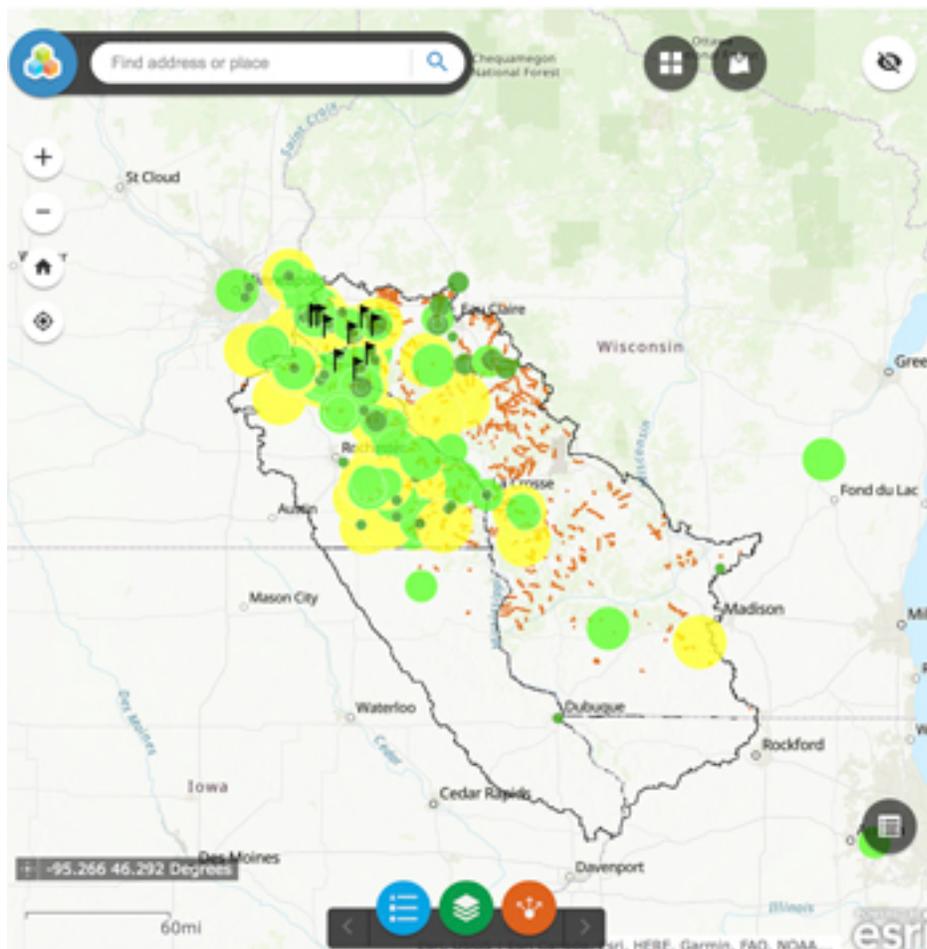


Photo by Bob Micheel LCD

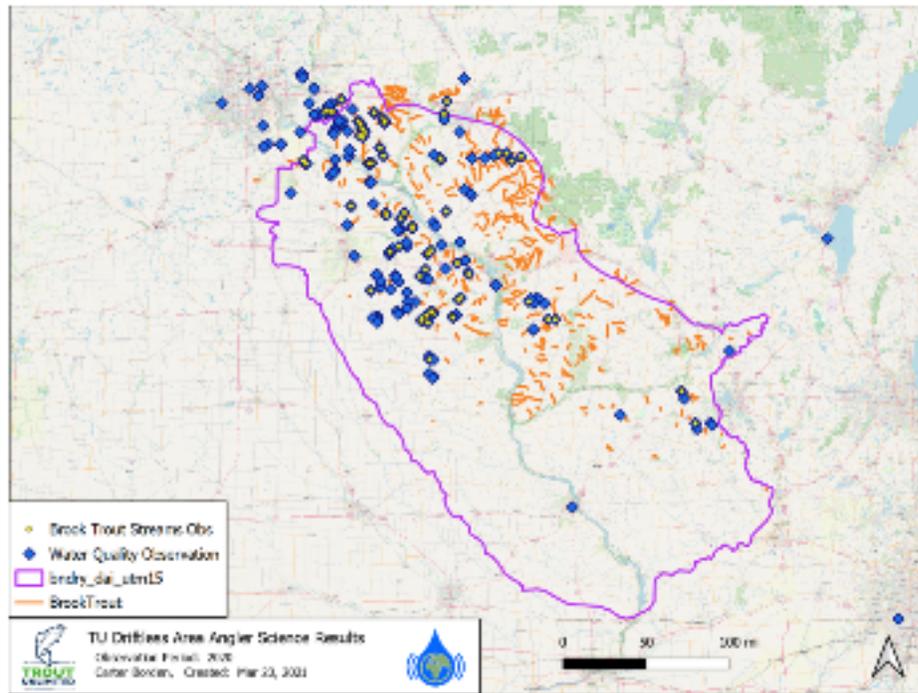
Anglers in the field are informed of the importance of water quality on stream habitat and the data are stored for use in improving fish habitat.

Now spanning the entire Driftless Area, the program includes anglers from nine of the 14 TU chapters in the Driftless, as well as biologists and resource agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Since 2019, 607 observations have been recorded in the Driftless and awareness of and participation in the program have steadily increased. Results are reported on the project website, in annual reports, and will be summarized in a scorecard that is currently in production.

In 2022, we are proposing to continue to support TU chapters and anglers as well as expand their involvement and spatial coverage to the southern portion of the Driftless Area.

As a larger data set gets populated, a more complete picture of the area will develop. Along with this larger picture, we will also have a greater number of engaged anglers who are both helping to advance our scientific knowledge and learning about water quality issues.



2020-/2021 TU Angler Science Program observations made in the Driftless Area and the subset of observations made on brook trout streams.

We believe that this work supports collaborative opportunities between anglers, resource management agencies, and the Driftless Area Restoration Effort to improve water quality in the Driftless Area.

If you or your chapter would like to become involved contact any of the TUDARE staff.



PROGRESS CONTINUES ON “KINNI” DAM REMOVAL EFFORT

In River Falls, several key steps took place in early March to help the Powell Falls Dam removal project on the Kinnickinnic River move closer to its goals: dam demolition and removal and restoration of nearly a mile of the river corridor.

First, on Feb. 28 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the city’s surrender of its federal license, which the city had requested last July. The move will transfer oversight of the dam removal to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and can speed up the completion of the project. In addition, ending the federal license allows the city to apply for a \$1 million DNR Municipal Dam Removal Grant.

Second, DNR assumed oversight on Feb. 1, followed by the city’s application for the dam grant on Feb. 2.

“This is a major milestone toward dam removal and river restoration and lets us move forward on a little more aggressive schedule,” said Kevin Westhuis, manager of the City’s Municipal Utilities. “Removing Powell Falls dam from FERC oversight and having an accepted decommissioning plan are the result of a lot of work by City staff and was ultimately a team effort among many stakeholders involved in this project.”

The city, [Kinni Corridor Collaborative \(KinniCC\)](#), and Trout Unlimited worked with Rep. Shannon Zimmerman, Gov. Evers and the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee to create this pathway for local investment in the 2021-2023 timeframe. TU Chapters and the state council raised \$5,000 to pay for a lobbyist’s help in the legislative effort, and TU volunteers worked hard to make it happen.

“I’m thrilled to see the process of removing the Powel Falls dam continuing to move forward,” Zimmerman said. “Removal of the dam is a priority in the long-term restoration of the Kinnickinnic. It is exciting to envision what the future of the Kinni corridor holds and I’ve been fortunate to be able to play a small role in this transformation.”

Powell Falls is the lower of the two remaining dams on the Kinni. Budget estimates currently estimate the cost of removal and restoration at \$3.3 million. The city is expected to contribute \$1.2 million and the DNR grant, if successful, will bring in another \$1 million.

The recent steps open the way for fund-raising of the \$1 million still needed to fully fund the effort. Hopes of project organizers are that the project will be able to begin this coming winter and will be completed in 2023.

Individuals, businesses, foundations and others are being invited to support this important project. Already, chapters in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois have chipped in significant dollars.

Following completion, the city has approved eventual removal of the remaining dam, Junction Falls, which for over a century has inundated the falls that give the city its name. That timeline is dependent on when funds can be raised to allow the second removal.

A key supporting stakeholder is the [Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#). Chapter volunteers have monitored the thermal impacts of the hydro dams on the Kinni since 1992, documenting the 4.5 degree increase in summer average temperatures downstream due to the warming effects of the dams over that 30-year period.

The Powell Falls Dam was damaged in a flood in June 2020 and the upstream impoundment was drawn down in October 2020. The river has cut a new channel through up to 13 feet of accumulated sediment.

Trout redds were observed in the former impoundment in January and anglers have been catching browns and an occasional brook trout there.

Initial monitoring results from the summer of 2021 suggest a 3 degree drop in the summertime high temperatures on the lower Kinni. Part of that drop may be due to the removal of the solar-heated impoundment water. Another possible contributor may be that cold inflows from the South Fork of the Kinni and spring ponds across the river from its confluence are now not warmed in the impoundment, but rather are flowing cold right into the lower river.

TU members across the upper Midwest have already responded to fund-raising efforts being carried out by Kiap-TU-Wish TU and Twin Cities TU members, with a goal of raising \$200,000 from all TU sources and members. Chapters might wish to make a donation and offer to match the contributions of their own members up to a certain level.

Gary Horvath, a long-time Kiap member and current vice president of the chapter, is one of several TU members working with the KinniCC fund-raising team. He leads a team working on funding from foundations and would welcome suggestions for possible foundations to approach.

If you wish to donate to the project, go to Kiaptuwish.org or to KinniCC and find the “Donate” buttons. At the same time, Twin Cities TU’s board will match up to \$15,000 worth of donations made [through its own website](#).

Duke Welter will continue to chair the KinniCC Fund-Raising committee, and can be reached at jweltertu@gmail.com.



DUKE WELTER RETIRES FROM TUDARE (COMPLETELY)



Last May I cut back
from full time to one
day a week. As of
March 31, I have ended my part-time employment with TUDARE.

Duke Welter

In the past year I have been busy working on the Kinnickinnic River Powell Falls Dam removal project. We're making progress there and 2022 will be a key year that will keep me busy. So, I guess I'm once again flunking retirement.

I have enjoyed immensely my time with TUDARE, working since its inception in 2004 and speaking around the region before that. Those first years as a volunteer required tens of thousands of miles of driving and scores of meetings, phone calls, interviews, tours and articles.

In 2010, Project Manager Jeff Hastings and Midwest Conservation Director Laura Hewitt asked me to come to work for TU. I stepped down from the national Board of Trustees and as chair of the National Leadership Council to become an in-the-field staffer for TUDARE.

My reasoning was, lots of people can be good trustees and NLC leaders, but this is a project about which I am passionate. And it's been, hands down, the favorite job of my life. I feel immensely lucky to have had the opportunity to help build this program into one of which we can all — volunteers and our small staff — be proud.

TUDARE has been a model for TU across the country, helping inspire a growing number of regional collaborative partnerships with strong volunteer involvement. They have different challenges and address them differently, but many many lessons are coming from TUDARE.

As Jeff says in his own retirement piece, it's been an honor to work with you all. I've been restored when I needed it by the great commitment of our grassroots volunteers, the excitement in rural communities about the work we've invited them to join, the results in improved conditions on these streams, and the resultant friendships. One could not ask for more. It has been an honor to work with you all. Thanks to you all and keep up the great work!



JEFF HASTINGS BIDS FAREWELL AFTER 16 YEARS WITH TUDARE

I'm going to take this liberty to let you know that I will be retiring from Trout Unlimited will be the end of April.

I started my career with TU 16 years ago after working for Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department for over 20 years. It's been a very exciting and a fulfilling 40-plus years doing conservation work in the Driftless Area.



Jeff Hastings

By the time you read this article we will have likely already offered the Project Manager position to someone else, who I'm sure will be excited and enthusiastic to continue the work building partnerships, writing grants, hosting field days and developing the symposiums.

The best part of this job has been building partnerships and friendships with other like-minded folks, which helps accelerate cold-water restoration projects. Finding something in common with your partners and talking about fishing, hunting, grandchildren, etc., has been a very enjoyable part of this job and the start of many friendships.

TUDARE has always been about building capacity of groups to do stream restoration, and we have tried to bring additional funding and technical assistance to as many projects and parts of the Driftless as we can. As a Driftless partnership we have seen a substantial increase in the number of projects completed each year and a huge increase in funding.

Our partners and Trout Unlimited chapters have been both financially and hands-on supportive of the TUDARE project since its inception and I am very grateful to all of you for helping make TUDARE the success it is — one of Trout Unlimited's most rocking projects!

My wife (Moirra) and I plan to do some traveling, continue with the Christmas tree farm, spend more time with family and friends, fish, hunt, and work on a future project list that covers two pages. I look forward to bumping into you again on a stream, symposium, or chapter meeting. Take care and, again, thank you for your support and friendship through the years.