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Q1

Chapter Number & Name (Example: 123 - Smith Creek Chapter)

594 - Canandaigua Lake Chapter

Q2

State

New York

Q3

First Name

Ralph

Q4

Last Name

Rothfelder

Q5

Email Address

rrothfelder@gmail.com

Q6

Phone Number

585-455-9959

Q7

Chapter Volunteer Role

Conservation Chairman

Q8

Project Title

Naples Creek Reconnection Project

Q9

Project Location (stream, watershed, GPS coordinates if possible)

Naples Creek, Canandaigua Lake Watershed

Q10

Salmonid Species Impacted and Threatened/Endangered Status (if applicable)

Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Q11

Please indicate which conservation strategy your project best fits:

Reconnect (Barrier to fish passage removal, in-stream flow enhancement etc...)

Q12

Amount Requested from Embrace A Stream

\$10,000

Q13

Project Timeline

Anticipated Start Date **06/17/2024** ,
Anticipated Completion Date **06/13/2025**

Q14

Has chapter received EAS funds before?

Yes

Q15

In 300 words or less, please note the project name and location, name of the applicant to chapter or council, amount requested, matching funds available, background or purpose of the project, goals and objectives, proposed actions or methods, anticipated scope of impact, and partners. The executive summary should be brief and to the point. The EAS committee will refer to it frequently during the review process.

The Canandaigua Lake Chapter is requesting \$10,000 for the "Naples Creek Reconnection Project" located in Naples, NY. This project will be matched with over \$60,000 from Ontario County SWCD through the Water Quality Improvement Project grant funding. EAS funds will specifically be used for the purchase of materials including rock and native plantings to restore the site post construction with over \$11,000 being put toward this project through extensive volunteer time of behalf of the chapter.

Naples Creek is unique because it's not a stocked stream, but rather supports a healthy population of naturally spawning Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). This population faces threats due to habitat and spawning area loss. Historically, fish traveled upstream from Canandaigua Lake to spawn, however over time road crossings were installed which created barriers to aquatic passage. A survey utilizing the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative protocol identified two culverts which were acting as severe barriers to aquatic passage.

The goal of this project is to reconnect 2 miles of stream which has been historically inaccessible to trout populations completing the restoration of a total of 11 miles of stream, reconnecting Canandaigua Lake with headwater spawning areas of Naples Creek. This will be done through the construction of in-stream structures to remediate two culvert outlets which have become perched. These structures will improve in-stream habitat, including riffle and pool features, as well as provide grade control to allow fish to more easily travel upstream through perched culverts.

This project will be completed in partnership with the Ontario County SWCD, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NYS DEC and the Town of Naples. Over 20 volunteers from TU will assist with the implementation of this project as well as help at open houses to be hosted highlighting the work being done and encouraging new members to join.

Q16

In 1000 words or less, describe the issue or opportunity being addressed. If applicable describe project location, including name of water body and salmonid species. Please show how this issue or opportunity has other regional or national significance. If the project is part of a TU national initiative, please explain the extent of coordination with TU national staff. If this project has received EAS funding in previous years, please provide a brief update on progress to date.

Naples Creek is an ecologically rich stream system located in Ontario County which begins in the hills above the Village of Naples before making its way to Canandaigua Lake, the namesake for our Chapter. Naples Creek is a cold-water stream which supports a natural spawning population of Rainbow Trout. Naples Creek and its tributaries support an active fisheries community which draws anglers each spring to the area. One survey conducted in 2017 by DEC documented anglers spending a total of 6,810 hours fishing during the month of April (Hammers & Austerman, 2019).

Naples Creek meanders through rural areas, passing under roads in several locations. Two of these locations create significant barriers to fish passage, making it nearly impossible for trout to reach headwater spawning areas. These culvert crossings, while not ideal, historically allowed fish to pass through. However, over time these culverts have created large scour pools at their outlets and now sit perched many feet above the stream bed, out of reach of most migrating fish. Conditions have to be ideal to allow mature fish to pass through, however these perched culverts create impassible barriers for juvenile fish and cut off several miles of important habitat.

The Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District conducted an inventory of stream crossings within the Naples Creek stream system utilizing the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocol. NAACC is comprised of a network of stakeholders across a 13 state region focused on compiling data for road-stream crossings so that they may be assessed and scored based on their fish and wildlife passability as well as culvert condition and risk of failure. Two culverts were identified as part of this assessment as being severe barriers to fish passage due to being perched. The remediation of the outlets of these culverts aligns with TU's goal of reconnecting river ecosystems to create diverse habitats which benefit not only fish species, but a wide range of aquatic and terrestrial species as well.

This stream system was selected because of its importance as spawning habitat for trout coming from Canandaigua Lake via Naples Creek. The reconnection of spawning habitats is essential to the continued success of local trout populations. Without interventions to correct the elevation difference between the streambed and culvert outlets, within the near future no trout will be able to pass through these barriers. This project proposes the installation of grade control structures in-stream leading to the culvert outlets. These structures will slowly raise the grade of the streambed and help to minimize the distance between the culvert outlet and the stream. Through a series of stepped structures, trout will then more easily be able to navigate upstream to spawn. This design also maintains the step-pool structure which creates important habitat for aquatic species while also stabilizing the streambed and streambanks.

The Canandaigua Lake Chapter will partner with the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District (the District), United States Fish and Wildlife, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Town of Naples and Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association (CLWA) to complete this project. TU will handle the coordination of partners as well as volunteers pre and post construction. Additionally, TU will be the lead agency on habitat restoration ensuring that the site is revegetated post construction with native trees and grasses. US Fish and Wildlife will be providing the design for the aquatic connectivity enhancements. The District will secure additional funds necessary to implement this large-scale restoration project as well as assist with permitting requirements through the use of the District's General Permit. DEC will assist with permitting as well as long term monitoring of the system. The proposed work will take place within the right-of-way of the Town highway department. CLWA and its vast network of volunteers and media outlets will be utilized to share updates and progress regarding the project and the importance of habitat restoration projects.

Q17

In 350 words or less, briefly describe the purpose of the project, resulting benefits for cold water conservation and the TU organization, including scope of impact. Also describe any economic benefits that will result from your work. Please be sure to note: The overall goal of the project (e.g. restore critical habitat for a certain species of endangered salmonid, build a local constituency to promote protection of a certain resource, improve the scientific understanding of an issue to improve river or fishery management etc..) List the specific conservation objectives for the project (e.g. restore X amount of habitat by Y method, educate X number of people through Y means, fill X information gap through Y research methods, influence local or state governing body to adopt X policy/law to protect Y habitat or fish etc...) List the specific TU strengthening objective for the project (e.g. recruit X new leaders or members by method Y, develop an actionable plan for a conservation campaign, increase TU coverage in local media by X% etc...)

The conservation objective for this project includes the reconnection of aquatic connectivity through two currently severe barriers utilizing in stream step-pool rock structures to eliminate perched culvert outlets. This will reconnect over 2 miles of upstream spawning habitat, restoring the connection of 11 miles of cold-water fisheries stream habitat, from Canandaigua Lake to the headwaters of Naples Creek. In addition, several thousand people will be provided information regarding the importance of aquatic habitat reconnection for cold water fisheries species as well as the opportunities for recreation provided by such systems and the benefits to recreation seen when habitat restoration work occurs. All of this work will highlight the efforts by Trout Unlimited at both a local and national level.

This project provides the Canandaigua Lake Chapter an opportunity to partner with two new agencies and therefore extend their reach in recruiting new members and educating the public about the work that Trout Unlimited does. This will be the first partnership between the Chapter with both the Ontario County SWCD and the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association. Ontario County SWCD and CLWA partner often and frequently have projects covered by local newspapers and media outlets. The Chapter typically advertises in the Daily Messenger, but these partnerships provide the opportunity for the Chapter to target up to six new media outlets (newspaper, newsletters and social media).

Q18

In 500 words or less, describe the actions or methods you will use to implement your proposal. Make sure to include plans for implementing both the conservation and strengthening TU objectives. If applicable explain the scientific or technical methods utilized in the project. Note if the project uses innovative or unique solutions to address fisheries problems or if the results can be transferred elsewhere. Please also include: A timeframe or schedule of when major activities will occur, including a list of any permits that will be obtained. The role of TU leaders, volunteers, or staff in the project and the names and qualifications of key participants. EAS projects require TU volunteers have significant involvement. An outreach plan to disseminate project results to TU, project partners, and especially the general public. A description of how you will measure or evaluate project outcomes. Explain the scientific or technical methods used to evaluate project results, including the indicators (an indicator is a specific, measurable target or goal) for project success. Grant recipients will be required to evaluate the outcomes of their projects by measuring these indicators before and after their project.

The project timeline is as follows.

Winter 2023 – Begin permitting process for Joint Application permit through Army Corp and DEC. The Ontario County SWCD will handle permitting through their office and the use of their General Permit.

Spring 2024 – Obtain permitting and begin procurement process for contractor.

Summer 2024 – Begin Construction

Fall 2024 – Complete construction and finalize stabilization

Winter 2024 – Trout Unlimited Members will prepare media articles recapping project highlights

Spring 2025 – Public Outreach event hosted by TU in the Town of Naples to coincide with opening of trout season. Installation of additional live stake plantings. Grant Closeout.

The Conservation Chairman for the Canandaigua Lake Chapter, Ralph Rothfelder, will coordinate project partners and handle general project oversight. The Conservation Chairman will also be responsible for coordinating TU member involvement and volunteer responsibilities. Much of this work requires large rock and heavy equipment which will be the responsibility of a trained contractor. Members and volunteers will work together to establish plantings along both project sites, stabilize sites post construction and conduct assessments of project success via creel surveys.

Project partners have extensive media networks which will be utilized to disseminate information pertaining to this project. TU members will create documents and posts regarding the mission and goals of the organization and how this project aligns with those. These will be posted to various Facebook pages, websites and published in newsletters. Project partners will also provide coverage of the project with an emphasis on the partnership with TU when describing the work being done. All posts regarding this project will be sure to tag TU and its partners in order to have widespread dissemination of project details.

Ontario County SWCD: District staff will assist with permitting and developing outreach materials pertaining to the project.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service: Gian Dodici - USFW will be providing the design for the project.

New York State DEC: DEC will assist with permitting and pre/post construction monitoring.

This project has been a known issue within the Naples creek trout fishing community for many years. Additional survey work utilizing the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative protocol for identifying barriers to fish passage confirmed the severity of the problem. This protocol provides a scale to which barriers are ranked based on their severity. The two culverts to be addressed as part of this project have been surveyed and identified as severe barriers to aquatic passage. Observations by NYS DEC staff have also noted that only during ideal conditions are adult trout able to pass through these perched culverts, meaning that these spawning grounds are not accessible every year depending on flow conditions. Once complete these culverts will be re-evaluated to show that they are no longer severe barriers to aquatic passage. The Canandaigua Lake chapter will be assisting with this re-evaluation as well as completing all final reports. This style of culvert retrofit for aquatic passage will be evaluated and replicated elsewhere within the area covered by the Chapter in future projects.

Q19

List at least 3 local media outlets you will contact (print, tv, radio online, social)

- Daily Messenger Newspaper
 - Facebook (CLWA and ONTSWCD)
 - www.canandaigualaketu.org
 - www.ontswcd.com
 - www.canandaigualakeassoc.org
-

Q20

In 500 words or less, provide a brief outline for how the applicant will broadcast information about the project and EAS awards to their local community. A robust communications plan will include press releases, social media posts, website updates, project location signage (temporary and permanent) and more. We ask that successful applicants submit no fewer than two updates through the course of the EAS funded project to TU suitable for sharing in our social media and emails.

The ability to spread the message regarding the work being done by TU and its partners allows everyone to further their goals and ultimately allows more conservation to happen. This project gives us an opportunity to fix what we have broken; to reconnect a stream system that has suffered due to our actions. By spreading this message, that the reconnection of our waterways holds vital importance to both the natural and manmade environment, we hope to be able to expand our reach locally and in turn nationally and encourage members of our community to become engaged in conservation efforts both through TU and beyond.

TU will be in contact with the local newspaper, the Daily Messenger, pre and post construction to educate the public about the work that is being done on Naples Creek. This will result in a minimum of 2 newspaper articles published in the local paper. TU Chapter members will be available to meet with a reporter on site pre and post construction to allow for media photographs of the site. The Chapter will also send a pre and post construction article to be shared with the Embrace A Stream project manager.

The Canandaigua Lake Chapter will provide regular updates to coincide with major steps forward in the project via their website, CanandiaguaLakeTU.com, as well as through their Tightlines newsletter. This newsletter is sent out monthly and will include updates on the project as we move forward.

Project partners will also distribute information highlighting the project and work being done by TU in the area. The Ontario County SWCD will regularly post updates to their Facebook page, newsletter and website when major steps forward have been taken with the project. Their newsletter is distributed to several hundred recipients and is published quarterly.

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association similarly will share information with their members and the general public via Facebook and newsletters. Each partner will be sure to share posts and photos published by other partners. Each partner will be tagged in these posts ensuring that the greatest number of viewers is reached.

Q21

In 500 words or less, provide a brief description of community awareness and education events the chapter will host at the project site or related to the project. Examples of community awareness and engagement events include: A public site visit before and/or after construction A Zoom program with partners inviting the public to learn more about the work and the resource being restored PowerPoint presentations made to local civic organizations such as garden clubs, land trusts, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions and others etc

The Canandaigua Chapter will have several opportunities to educate and engage the public on the work being done in Naples Creek. Currently, the chapter is involved in the Trout in the Classroom program and is looking to expand the program to the Naples School District in order to involve students and educate them on the importance of cold-water fisheries and conservation efforts. This will give the Chapter and its volunteers the opportunity to engage with students local to the project and teach them about conservation efforts to protect aquatic habitat. While it would be ideal to take students to the project, the proximity to the road with limited space makes it unsafe to host groups at the project sites.

We as a Chapter have also coordinated with Naples Brewing, a local brewery in Town, to host an event centered around the project to provide outreach to the community regarding the importance of stream reconnection projects for cold water fish and other aquatic species. This workshop is scheduled to coincide with the annual Trout Derby hosted every April 1st as well as the seasonal release of the breweries "Rainbow Run" lager. The goal would be to host an event before and after construction to first educate the community on the work planned and then to demonstrate the work that was accomplished and the positive impact to the environment. The Chapter will also use these events as opportunities to recruit new members so that we may expand our volunteer base in order to accomplish even more as an organization.

Q22

Upload Your EAS Budget (Budget template available at www.tu.org/eas - be sure to save your final budget as a PDF before uploading.)

Budget%20Form.pdf (369.7KB)

Q23

Letters of Support (Upload all letters of support as one merged PDF file. At the LEAST you MUST have a letter of support from 1) the chapter president, 2) the council chair, 3) the sponsoring professional, 4) the landowner of the property where the work is taking place. Chapters are encouraged to have letters of support from partner organizations, state and local agency partners and TU staff involved in the project.)

All%20Letters%20of%20Support.pdf (2.8MB)

Q24

Supporting Documents (Upload all supporting documents as one combined PDF file. These may include site images and descriptions, final or conceptual project plans etc...)

Supporting%20Documents.pdf (4.6MB)
