



# The Driftless Leader

Quarterly Newsletter of Coulee Region Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited  
Coulee Region Chapter  
#278

Coulee Region TU  
Spring 2008

## Coulee Chapter Announces Major Project

The Coulee Region Chapter of Trout Unlimited will coordinate a major stream restoration project in Vernon County involving federal, state, county agencies beginning in the spring of 2008. The \$240,000 project will be completed over a four year period and restore 6,000 feet of stream banks on Coon Creek and Spring Coulee Creek, located just northeast of Coon Valley near County Highway P.

Coulee Region TU, a local conservation group with 190 members, recently received a \$180,000 Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. WHIP is a program that provides technical assistance and up

to seventy-five percent cost sharing to develop and improve wildlife habitat. The remaining \$60,000 for the project will be contributed from other sources, including local fundraising efforts.

According to Sam Skemp, District Conservation Officer for the NRCS Viroqua Service Center, the project proposal ranked very high with the NRCS because of the number of at-risk species that the project will be able to benefit. Skemp added, "This is the largest WHIP funded project ever in the state of Wisconsin."

Eric Rauch, Coulee Region TU Vice President & Conservation Chair, noted that "the overall goal with this project is to increase the water quality and species habitat in the Coon Creek/Spring Coulee

See "Project," page 2

## Fundraising Banquet Successful

Our chapter's major fundraising event for 2008 took place on Friday, February 29 at Cedar Creek Country Club. Approximately one hundred members and friends of Coulee Region Trout Unlimited gathered to share stories, meet new fishing buddies, and win prizes.

This year's banquet featured a bottle of maple syrup at each place setting, donated by Ruth Rupp of Ocooch Mountain Acres. We also had hundreds of prizes that were

raffled and given away, including fishing rods, prints, and gear.

Chapter treasurer Bob Hubbard reports that the event raised \$4,000 for upcoming conservation and education projects.

Thanks to all the volunteers and contributors who made this year's banquet a success. And special thanks should go to Nathan Barnhart, who chaired this year's banquet committee and Eric Rauch who worked tirelessly to collect prizes for the event.

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### Coulee Region Trout Unlimited Officers

- Rick Kyte, President / Newsletter Editor
- Eric Rauch, Vice President / Grant Coordinator
- Bob Hubbard, Treasurer
- Brian Larrington, Website Editor
- Steve Mach, Membership Coordinator

## Project (cont'd from p. 1)

watershed.” He identified several steps to attain that goal.

The first step is to remove the accumulated siltation in the streambed and valley floor using heavy equipment excavation and then create gentle sloping banks which will not erode back into the stream.

The second step is to reconstruct a natural environment that will provide a habitat suitable for reproduction, hibernation, and protection from predators for fish, snakes, and aquatic invertebrates. This will be accomplished by installing limestone riprap, rock weirs, in-stream logs, and lunker structures and by improving backwater habitats and wetland scrapes.

The third step will be to provide a buffer zone of natural grasses and trees along the stream banks, which will decrease run-off and ensure increased habitat for other species.

Over the four year project period, measurable objectives will be documented in the form of pre and post project water quality monitoring and species presence monitoring.

Coulee Region TU will also provide for continued stewardship of the watershed through future maintenance and public education of this valuable environmental resource.

### Conservation Congress Hearings to Take Place April 14

Don't forget to attend the Conservation Hearings in your county on April 14. This year Ballot Question #36 addresses the issue of special regulations on certain trout streams in the state. Last year, a small group of citizens managed to overturn special regulations on a small section of Prairie River, thus opening the entire stream open to greater harvest of trout. TU is advocating a more conservative approach to trout stream regulation that would ensure the DNR biologists have an opportunity to study the possible benefits of special regulation on certain sections of streams in order to make informed and wise decisions. If you care about ensuring that our resources are protected, please make a point of attending the Conservation Congress hearings in April. A schedule of times and locations is listed on the next page.

## Calendar

### Chapter Meetings

#### March 19

Shawna Stringham

Vernon County Conservation Officer  
*Officer Stringham will talk about the early trout season & share some of her experiences serving as a warden.*

#### April 16

Todd Fuller

*Surf Fishing in Mexico for Rooster Fish*

#### May 21

Todd Hansen

Editor of *WisTrout* and Author of *Map Guide to Improved Trout Waters of Wisconsin*

Regular monthly meetings are held at:

#### Forest Hills Golf Club

600 Losey Blvd N., La Crosse

6:00pm Social Hour

7:00pm Presentation

If you get a chance, tune into watch the TV show “Discover Wisconsin” on Channel 19 WXOW at 5 pm on March 16 (Sunday). It will feature an hour long show about trout fishing and other things to do in the Kickapoo Valley region.



## Stream restoration planning workshop

By Jeff Hastings

This year's Stream Restoration Project Planning Workshop to be held at Westby, WI, March 29-30, still has room for participants.

This is the third year Trout Unlimited will be organizing a two-day event for volunteers to improve their skills in developing stream restoration projects.

The cost for the two-day event is \$90 and includes materials, meals, and two nights lodging at the Living Waters Bible Camp outside of Westby.

Participants attending this year workshop will learn how to:

- raise funds for projects,
- design projects that incorporate habitat for nongame species,
- manage the vegetation in the riparian area,
- develop post-project reporting,
- start an internship program for their chapter,
- develop an easement program, and
- organize a successful workday.

Saturday there will be time for fishing or watching a stream shocking demonstration to learn about proper placement of habitat structures.

Sunday the workshop will conclude with a two hour "Project Planning Exercise" led by Laura Hewitt, Midwest Conservation Director and Watershed Programs Director for TU.

Participants with less experience in stream restoration will be able to learn from those attending that have developed local restoration projects.

To register or get more information, contact TUDARE Project Manager Jeff Hastings at (608) 606-4158 or [jhastings@tu.org](mailto:jhastings@tu.org).

### Conservation Congress Hearings

April 14, 7:00pm

**La Crosse** Onalaska High School, Field House, 700 Hilltop Place, Onalaska

**Vernon** Viroqua High School, 100 Blackhawk Drive, Viroqua

**Monroe** Sparta High School, Auditorium, 506 N. Black River St., Sparta

**Crawford** Crawford County Courthouse, Court Room, 220 N. Beaumont Road, Prairie du Chien

**Juneau** Olson Middle School, Auditorium, 508 Grayside Avenue, Mauston



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#278

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Find us on the Web  
[www.couleeregiontu.org](http://www.couleeregiontu.org)

## Joining Trout Unlimited

There are three easy ways to become a member of Trout Unlimited:

- 1) Pick up a Membership Form at one of our Monthly Meetings.
- 2) Apply online at [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org). Simply click the Join/Renew tab at the top of the page and follow the instructions.
- 3) Call 1-800-834-2419

Be sure to indicate that you want to join club #278.

## The La Crosse County Conservation Alliance Banquet

Tuesday, April 8

Baus Haus

6:00pm

Tickets: \$13

The purpose of the Conservation Alliance is to provide a forum for La Crosse County conservation organizations that seek to promote sound management of natural resources for the benefit of people and wildlife.

For Tickets contact

Marc Schultz (608) 781-1662

Harry Meinking at (608) 781-9949