



From the President

As summer comes to a close and fall is in the air, I look back on a very busy season. I was able to spend a good deal of time on the stream – very little of that time fishing. Most was spent on habitat improvement work and Hiawatha Chapter business. At the beginning of summer, the Hiawatha Board was struggling with determining our

role in this new environment of the Lessard-Sams funding. All the time and effort we had spent on volunteer improvement was now being done with Minnesota Legislature funding at the recommendation of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. We now have a good understanding of how the process works and what we can do in partnership with the State Council and the MN DNR, and look forward to expanding this relationship to help cold water fisheries in SE MN.

I have asked Phil Pankow to be the Hiawatha Chapter liaison with the National Trout Learning Center in Preston. In the months to come, I will be introducing our chapter's new Habitat Improvement reps, and our new Education committee.

Currently, the Board is looking at several plans for the 2011 fundraising banquet. Some interesting options are possible, so we'll keep you informed as these plans develop.

The response to this year's Fall Rendezvous was positive, and those attending encouraged us to repeat the event next year. As a result, we have reserved the Whitewater State Park Group Camp cabins and dining hall for the weekend of September 8 - 10, with MNTU and the TCTU. We will be inviting members of other Minnesota TU chapters, the Federation of Fly Fishers, the Minnesota Trout Association, and Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota. I am excited about having this opportunity to offer a day of family-oriented, fishing-related activities. A casting course and clinics, knot, furlled leader, and fly tying venues, 'name that bug' contests, equipment swaps – all are ideas being offered in a setting 'on the stream' in Whitewater. I will need your ideas and suggestions to help develop this idea; I will need your 'hands on' help to make it a success. So please call or email me and let me know how you can help. Otherwise, I will call you!

I would like to thank all of you for asking me to be your President. I have learned a great deal this past year. I'm pleased to have been involved in the decision regarding our care of our cold water resources. I am able to hold my head high knowing that we are doing so much to preserve and improve the water that we hold so dear. Let's continue in this effort so that we and future generations will be able to enjoy it.

Scott

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Ray Ricketts / Deb Angelotti



- Presidents Message
- Up Coming Meetings and Events
- Whitewater Trout Stream Dedication
- 2010 Flood Report



TROUT STREAM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IS FINISHED ON WHITEWATER RIVER

The trout population in southeast Minnesota streams is making a strong comeback after many fish were lost due to the floods that hit that area in August, 2007. That's the lesson of the Crow Springs section of the Middle Branch of the Whitewater River, where the fish count went from 300 trout per mile in 2008 to over 950 trout last fall.

The resilient fish have received a lot of help from volunteers – and taxpayers. A habitat improvement project on a 3.1-mile section of this stream between Rochester and Winona, Minn., was completed this summer as the result of funds awarded by the Minnesota Legislature based upon the recommendation of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Since 1985, there has been a program of annual cooperation between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Lanesboro Area Fisheries Office) and the Hiawatha Chapter of Trout Unlimited to improve the trout habitat in the Middle Branch, including channel narrowing, bank stabilization and sloping, trout cover installation, and fencing. The DNR has praised the volunteer workers who “invested untold hours and energy improving [this] significant section of the Whitewater.”

After nearly a quarter century of slow improvements to the once-silt-laden stream, an Outdoor Heritage Fund grant allowed the restoration of a 3.1-mile section to be finished this summer. The project's completion was celebrated at a dedication ceremony at the stream on Aug. 28, 2010. Present were representatives from the Minnesota Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers, Fly Fishing Women of Minnesota, and several chapter of Trout Unlimited.

In 1970 there were only 70 trout per mile in the Crow Springs section of the stream because of very poor spawning conditions and the lack of adequate trout cover due to accumulated silt from agricultural runoff. Today the stream banks are sloped in this section to reconnect the Whitewater with its flood plain and to minimize the impact of flooding on the stream. In addition, the creation of pools, overhead cover, and the natural turbulence that maintains a cool water temperature creates a perfect habitat for trout.

Hiawatha TU fishermen working on the Middle Branch have developed a sense of ownership to their section of the Whitewater, where the trout population is protected by catch-and-release regulations.

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited is currently working with the DNR on two other stream improvement projects in southeast Minnesota funded by the Legacy Amendment -- Trout Run and Mill Creek.

Contact: John Lenczewski at 612-670-1629, or jlenczewski@mntu.org



UP COMING EVENTS/ MEETINGS

MEETINGS

Monday, October 4th

7pm at Izaak Walton Cabin

Subject: National Trout Learning Center

NTLC Staff

Monday, November 1st

7 pm at Izaak Walton Cabin

Subject: Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage – process and status

Ray Ricketts/ Carl Berberich

Monday, December 6th

6pm at Izaak Walton Cabin

Annual Christmas Party

BOARD MEETINGS

2nd Monday of the Month

7pm at Gander Mountain

Board Meetings are open to the public



Synopsis of the 9/26/2010 email from Gary Sobotta.....

Tom and I inspected the Trout Run, Crow Springs, and Mill Creek project areas yesterday.

I am pleased to report the Trout Run project is looking like a million bucks. It proves beyond any doubt that Hiawatha TU habitat projects work for the trout, the stream and us anglers/ conservationists. Second, and this is really exciting to me, because of the way the projects are designed, the stream bottoms with all this high water are now scoured out and mostly free of fine silt in the major riffle areas. (I would believe) this means this falls spawning fish will find ideal conditions for successful spawning and, if we have a normal or slightly above normal winter temperatures and no major winter or spring runoff events the year class for 2010/2011 should be beyond belief on our projects. In all my years of trout fishing and doing HI work, I have never seen potential conditions stacking up so well with only a month to go until spawning starts. If things work out the way they could we are going to have some of the best trout angling in the world in our backyard the next few years.

Crow Spring/Middle Branch Whitewater River also faired very well. After three flood events since August 6th, two of which are in the top five of all time, I can confidently say Tom and I feel very good that we now understand how to work with the flows caused by (the lower Quincy) bridge. We have a solution that should last for more years than most of us will be around.

That brings up a very important point that HTU has to put on their "to do" list. The chapter has to be responsible for making sure that Crow Spring/MBWWR maintenance work gets done in a timely manner after high water events. The stream crossing fences need to be put back after high water events or all of this year's work is going to rapidly get messed up by the cattle. In addition any trees that fall into the stream need to be removed ASAP or they will cause big problems.

Now the ugly one – Mill Creek. As we all know the Mill Creek project has been one of extreme frustration for Tom and me, and anyone else who knows about trout stream HI. Three out-of- the-bank high water events, two of which were major floods on raw exposed soils since August 6th, have made this one very challenging. We are once again waiting for the water to go down and the site to dry out enough so we can again pick of the pieces and move forward towards getting that pain in the you know what done. The banks are holding real well even without any grass on them. There has been repeated large trees washing down that have collided with the banks during the three floods and still there is only minimal repairs going to be needed on the banks themselves.

Now the bright side of the Mill Creek project. Where the banks were finished and sloped after structure and/or rip rap installation, we have had minimal issues with soil erosion. In fact, the major issue on Mill Creek from these high water events has been soil deposition. In my opinion that is very impressive given the soil type and huge number of cold water seeps and springs found in the project site. Also, the amount of clean bottom substrates that are showing up in the upper end of the project site is another real positive situation. Where (it) was an entirely silt covered bottom, we are now seeing more and more rocky rubble bottom in the riffle areas. Great for invertebrates and spawning!

Now to address the soil deposition issue. The amount of soil left behind on the banks after the flood is our single largest problem. Many tons of soil have been dumped on top of our seeding and mulching effectively burying and killing our seeding. This deposition caused by poor land use practices is a major problem and it is going to certainly be the number one maintenance issue for Mill Creek. It also points out the need for better land use practices and enforcement of current waterway setback rules. We must continue to address this critical watershed issue, our streams will never come close to reaching their potential if they are continually suffocated in silt!!

It takes a team to get this stuff done and Hiawatha TU should be very proud of what you have done this summer. Thanks for letting Tom and me be part of that success!!!

If you can help us, our plan is if dry enough (going to inspect it again this afternoon) we will start back on Mill Creek tomorrow, please feel free to call me at 507-254-5702 or Tom at 507-272-9123. We can certainly use some help with spot seeding and clean up after this past flood.

Four days left to the 2010 season so get out there and take advantage of all your hard work.

Gary

**MILL CREEK
2010 FLOOD**



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