

Bear Creek Habitat Improvement Project (BCHIP) Update 2012

The start of second phase of the Bear Creek restoration project has begun. Over 40 people attended the LUNKER (Little Underwater Neighborhood Keepers Encompassing Rheotactic Salmonids) building day on June 2, 2012. Together we constructed 61 full-size LUNKERS and 2 half-size LUNKERS. These are wooden structures that are placed in the outside bend of the stream to provide overhanging cover for trout. LUNKERS are amazing homes for the trout which tend to move in as quickly as they are placed in the water. The contractor will install the LUNKERS, other habitat features, wetland restorations, and streambank restoration to control erosion along another mile of Bear Creek. The project will start June 11 and run for approximately one month.

Bear Creek flows along State Highway 130 down from Sauk and into Richland County where it empties into the Wisconsin River just west of Lone Rock. The project is located in Sauk County starting approximately three miles north of the Richland County line. The property is owned by the Fargen Family with an easement along Bear Creek from the DNR to allow fishing. The local Trout Unlimited Chapter (TU) sought out funding opportunities and worked with federal, state, and county staff to develop plans, get permits, and supervise construction.

Nearly one mile of Bear Creek has been restored just south of this project and are ready to be fished.

This second project phase will have a different look from the first project. These streambanks are not as high, and there are some good existing riffles and pools. Riffles are shallow rocky areas important for trout feeding and spawning. Deep pools provide cover and resting areas for trout. The new plan protects and improves these areas and establishes grass on eroding banks to protect this work.

If you are interested in learning more about this project or would like to view the site during construction, contact Brent Bergstrom of the Conservation, Planning, and Zoning Department at bbergstrom@co.sauk.wi.us or (608) 355-4836.



Crew building LUNKERS on June 2, 2012



Constructed LUNKERS waiting to be placed.