



PRESS RELEASE

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Bear Creek Habitat Project Underway

Contractor has begun first phase of stream restoration.

PLAIN, Wis. – The Bear Creek Habitat Improvement Project site has been bustling with activity the past several weeks. The contractor started several weeks ago, and that means the most important stage of the project -- heavy equipment on the ground, dump trucks hauling rock, dozers moving dirt, excavators creating habitat – is happening now. An experienced stream restoration crew from Holtz Lime & Gravel of Loganville is doing what it does best. When the dust settles, a thing of beauty will appear: a meandering, silt-free stretch of premier trout habitat amidst a scenic Driftless Area valley.

During the past year volunteers from the Aldo Leopold Chapter of Trout Unlimited have secured a variety of public and private grants to fund the approximately \$130,000 needed to complete the first mile-long phase of the project. Plans are to continue seeking grants to fund a second phase in 2012. The project is located along Highway 130 three miles north of Bear Valley, and about 15 miles northwest of Spring Green.

Bear Creek is within the geologically important, unglaciated Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River basin. The Sauk County Land and Water Resource Management Plan and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have ranked Bear Creek in their long-term plans as a “high priority for non-point project selection.” This means restoration efforts will have wide-ranging, positive effects on water quality, flood management, wild trout populations and will benefit and enhance the broader natural communities.

The stream is being deepened and narrowed, and structures will be strategically added to create more riffle/pool habitat. Banks will be repaired, stabilized and tapered to reduce erosion and siltation. The project will even include features to improve habitat for non-game species such as turtles and birds. As a first step in the project, a permanent public fishing easement was secured along Bear Creek, so the public will have access to and be able to enjoy the improved future fishery.

About the Aldo Leopold Chapter of Trout Unlimited

The Aldo Leopold Chapter’s mission is to conserve, protect, restore and enhance trout and salmonid fisheries, watersheds, the groundwater that sustains them, and the doctrine of public trust that defends them, in Columbia, Dodge and Sauk Counties. We do this through education, cooperation, rehabilitation, and advocacy using an extensive and dedicated volunteer network.

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