



North Bear Notebook

November 2014

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 13

The next chapter meeting will be held this **Thursday, November 13**. This month's presentation will feature Mike Steuck from the NE Iowa Fisheries Office of the DNR. Mike will discuss the trout program, management approach, funding sources, and the state of Iowa's streams for the coming year.

Felix and Oscar's Address: 4050 Merle Hay Road (immediately north of Sears), Merle Hay Mall. (515) 278-8887. We meet in The Pub section -- Go to end of bar, turn right into private room.

In this update . . .

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- [DNR Commission Approves Paint Creek Acquisition](#)
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Upcoming Events

November 13
Chapter Meeting
Felix and Oscar's
6:30 p.m.

December 11
Chapter Meeting
Felix and Oscar's
6:30 p.m.

January 8
Chapter Meeting
Felix and Oscar's
6:30 p.m.

February 12
Chapter Meeting
Felix and Oscar's
6:30 p.m.

March 12
Chapter Meeting
Felix and Oscar's
6:30 p.m.

President's Message

I take this opportunity to give you updates on assorted conservation projects underway.

Invasive species removal: The project is in the Driftless Area of Northeast Iowa, upstream of the Paint Creek Unit of the Yellow River State Forest in the Paint Creek Watershed in Allamakee County. Paint Creek is a cold-water tributary to the Mississippi River and feeds into the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Paint Creek has become a major source and conduit for invasive Japanese knotweed resulting in the most widespread infestation in Iowa. The infestation negatively impacts important state and private forests and streams, and threatens federally endangered plants.

Iowa Chapters of Trout Unlimited, the Iowa DNR, and Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) have the following goals for the project:

- Educate private landowners in the watershed about the invasiveness of Japanese knotweed and the most effective control methods.
- Demonstrate the most effective control methods on 5 or more acres of knotweed.
- Conduct local publicity about the project and Trout Unlimited's contribution.

This important Coldwater conservation project will address the monoculture of Japanese knotweed and the resulting loss of beneficial habitat for insect diversity and the soil erosion taking place in the stands, adding tons of unwanted sediment to the cold-water stream during flood events.

Protecting cold-water streams:

- a. We are developing a project directed at planting trees along or near to a trout stream. Trees will help in erosion control, cooler water and fishers, carbon reduction, and aesthetics. Funding would come via a grant from Trees Forever. We are determining a partner such as a county, city or Iowa DNR.
- b. I provided national information on my views of implementing a national water rule.
- c. I presented my views on implementing improved waters in Iowa.
- d. The chapter donated \$500 in support of Iowa DNR in its application for a Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant that would supply funds to them to acquire two important properties in NE Iowa. One is a 40 acre addition to Yellow River State Forest, only one mile. The other is a 77.5 acre property on the north side of the Bloody Run Wildlife Management Area in northern Clayton County. These two properties will add important bird habitat and additional recreational opportunities to the existing public areas. Bloody Run Creek, a cold water trout stream, flows through the corner of the 77.5 acre property, thus more trout stream and watershed will be protected.

Air Carbon reduction and climate change: I continue representing Trout Unlimited (and myself) with assorted non-profits.

- a. Citizens Climate Lobby is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. Its focus is to generate the political will necessary for passage of a [Carbon Fee and Dividend proposal](#).
- b. Organizing for Action. I chair a committee whose efforts are directed at improving our environment to address climate change.
- c. Iowa Environmental Council is an alliance of diverse organization and people working together to protect Iowa's diverse environment.
- d. I've told elected officials of our need to address climate change now.

I trust all TU people will instigate a personal effort to improve our environment.

Tight Lines,

Bob Bernard
President, TU North Bear

DNR Commission Approves Paint Creek Acquisition

Two years ago, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation had the opportunity to purchase land just south of Waterville, Iowa, along Paint Creek. Last year, they offered this property to the Iowa DNR. The DNR was interested, but needed a demonstration of public support for such a large acquisition--the parcel is 368 acres and contains over two miles of stream. The Iowa TU chapters, HFFA, Dubuque Fly Fishers, Iowa Audubon and other organizations stepped up to help bridge the gap, and the funds were raised by summer.

At their September meeting, the Iowa DNR Commissioners approved the purchase of the land. The area has been designated Iowa's first Audubon Globally Important Bird area, and the purchase will also protect some significant algific slopes. The trout water will be publicly-accessible, and will add to

the existing Paint Creek access in the Yellow River State Forest.

The water should be open for fishing next spring.

This stretch of water is also included in the knotweed removal project being undertaken by the Northeast Iowa RCD. There is approximately 65 acres of knotweed that need to be treated in that watershed, and between 7 and 10 of that were addressed in the first summer of work. TU chapters are pledging to again assist with project costs next summer, and a series of workdays will be planned in the spring.

Pine Springs Rendezvous and TUDARE Tour Wind Down Project Season

On the weekend of October 11, a dozen TU volunteers and others gathered at Seed Saver's Exchange for an end-of-season workday, campout and fishing weekend. While the evenings were a bit cold, the SSE staff provided a large pile of firewood and a nice campsite out of the wind.

On Saturday morning the group cleared about an acre of willows from the stream corridor, and toured last year's project sites. After a big lunch, the SSE staff drew for the door prize of a weekend at the cabin on the farm--which went to Kate Lodge from the Iowa Spring Creeks chapter. Most of the participants remained to fish on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. The weather was largely cooperative, though the fish took some encouragement.

We plan on holding the event again next year

Seed Saver's was also a stop on this year's TUDARE Stream Restoration Project Tour. On October 15, approximately 75 habitat and fisheries specialists, TU volunteers, landowners and others participated in the tour of three stream sites. They were joined by a dozen members of TU's Western Watersheds staff, as well as Steve Moyer from the national office.

The trip began outside of Dorchester along Waterloo Creek, the site of a major IDNR project in 2013. From there, they moved to SSE, where they toured the multiple projects that have been undertaken there over the past decade. SSE also hosted the group's lunch stop, and provided a brief tour of the farm operation.

The afternoon was spent on Pine Creek near Rushford, MN. Minnesota TU has undertaken a multi-year project on the stream above town, covering more than 4 miles of fishable water. The group stopped at multiple sites, and had the opportunity to speak with landowners along the way.

TUDARE/Jeff Hastings Honored

Trout Unlimited's Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE) and its project manager, Jeff Hastings of Westby, were honored Sept. 24 at the Wild Trout Symposium meeting in West Yellowstone, Mont. The Wild Trout Stewardship Award, presented every four years, honors "an outstanding fishery program that makes a strong contribution to the conservation or restoration of a coldwater fishery."

Under Jeff's leadership, TUDARE has dramatically expanded the dollars available to restore streams, reduce streambank erosion, and improve habitat for fish and many other species across the region. More than \$50 million has been raised for projects since TUDARE began, and over 250 miles of public fishing has been obtained.

The TUDARE program has been called "one of the finest landscape-scale restoration projects in the nation, highlighted by excellent community, state, federal and volunteer involvement."

Our congratulations go out to Jeff Hastings -- the award is much deserved. And thanks as well to all of you for doing what you do to make TUDARE work--at the local, chapter, council, TU staff, agency, and foundation levels. None of it would be possible without one of the country's best networks of volunteers and professional supporters.



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TROUT UNLIMITED

Conserving, protecting and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

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