

HARRY AND LAURA NOHR CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

POMPEY PILLAR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2016



Report Prepared by the
Project Committee
Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Sponsorship and Partners

The role of the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter in this project was to serve as a project sponsor and leader. The chapter does not have the physical or financial resources to undertake a project of this magnitude alone; it is necessary to collaborate with other organizations for volunteer labor and financial assistance. The Nohr chapter, as always after any major project, is indebted and grateful for the financial and physical efforts it has received through the year. We also look forward to continuing these joint ventures in our ongoing habitat improvement efforts.

The partners for the 2016 Pompey Pillar Habitat Improvement Project are as follows:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
TU National Embrace-a-Stream
Elliot Donnelley Chapter TU
Friends of Wis. Trout
Madison Fishing Expo
Badger Fly Fishers
Southern WI Chapter TU
Lee Wulff Chapter TU
Black Hawk Chapter TU
Dave Roh Excavating



A small back water area created below a small crossing (one of three that were installed) that will allow mower access to help maintain the site in the future.

Background

The Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited undertake habitat improvement projects as a part of its mission “to conserve, protect, and enhance the cold water streams of Southwest Wisconsin”. Although Pompey Pillar creek is very small it is a high quality Brook trout stream fed by numerous springs.

This project site is on state owned property and is considered the headwaters of Pompey Pillar Creek. The numerous springs flowing throughout the site create an excellent brook trout stream. Above the project site the water flow is minimal and in a dry year may actually stop flowing.



Stream Conditions before the Project



Lower end of site looking upstream from the road.
The entire site was overgrown with invasive vegetation, boxelders and willows.



Upper berm.
The vegetation was so thick we weren't aware that this berm existed until we brushed the site.



This is the lower berm. It was breeched where you see the stream, after it was purchased by the DNR.



The stream impinged on the hillside because of a high bank on the opposite side causing substantial erosion. Tapering this high bank should slow stream velocity during a high water event, easing erosion on the hill.



Most of the brush that was removed on the lower section was burned because of the narrow stream corridor. On the upper end where the corridor was wider we placed several large brush piles along the hillside to create habitat for woodland and edge fauna.

Stream and Riparian Improvement Work

In 2016 the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited along with its partners improved stream habitat along approximately 3000 feet of Pompey pillar Creek, a tributary of Otter Creek in Iowa County. The stream on the project site runs through a narrow part of the valley between the town road and a hillside. In the past this site has seen some land use practices that were detrimental to the stream. According to the son of the land owner who sold the property to the state, the upper section at one time actually had a black top processor located on the stream. We found remnants of this, which consisted of large slabs of blacktop and gravel. The lower section had two large berms which stretched from the road to the hillside. This impoundment created a large pond on the lower section. He said the pond was there when his dad purchased the property in the early 1950's.. The rest of the site was actively pastured until the land was sold to the DNR in 1988. After the purchase the DNR breached the lower berm. Since that time the site had grown up to an almost impenetrable thicket of multi-flora rose, honeysuckle, burdock, wild parsnip, boxelder and willow trees, and other undesirables.

The first part of the project consisted of brushing all the undesirable vegetation and trees. Some desirable trees were left such as oak, hackberry, butternut, and some willow and elm. Incised, eroding stream banks were tapered and armored with rip-rap where appropriate. Some of the trees removed from the project site were utilized for instream structure such as log deflectors, cross logs and root wads. A number of weirs were also incorporated to help scour holes. Three small crossings were incorporated to allow for future mowing of the site. This will allow us to keep the undesirable and invasive vegetation under control. The site was initially seeded with some cold season grasses. Late this fall we also seeded some of the site with some native forbs and grasses. Our hope is that continued seeding, mowing, and possibly burning will return the site to a more appropriate state.



This is the lower earthen berm that was breached when DNR purchased the property.



Same site with the berm removed from road to hillside.

Conclusion

Pompey Pillar is one of the many beautiful streams in our part of the driftless area. Because this section of stream is located on state owned ground it is open to public fishing. Prior to this project it was almost impossible to fish this site regardless of the angling technique used. After the work was completed it is more accessible and fishing friendly. It also has more fish holding capacity because of the instream structures that were installed and deeper holes and runs. The entire site is now visible from the road that it parallels. As the site opened up and work progressed we had many positive comments from surrounding landowners. It is our hope that some of them may consider selling fishing easements and allow us to do similar work on their properties in the future. We feel that this was another very successful project.

The Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited is proud to have sponsored this project, and is deeply grateful to our many partners listed in this report. A special thanks to the DNR personnel, Bradd Sims, David Rowe, and Jeff Schure who helped us see this project through to its successful conclusion. As with every stream conservation program, partnerships among landowners, businesses, anglers, county, state and federal government officials, and the state and national TU organizations are essential for the continued success of our habitat improvement projects.



A completed section awaiting seed and mulch.