Final Report of the West Branch White River Restoration at Younglove Easement Project December 30, 2024 River Restoration Grant RM08621

Presented to:

Gina Keenan Surface Waters Grant Coordinator

David Bolha Water Quality Biologist– Bureau of Water Quality and Division of Environmental Management

This project restores trout habitat in the West Branch of the White River to sustain populations by providing shelter, feeding and spawning habitat, reduces bank erosion and removes old structures enabling natural stream flow reconnected to its floodplain.

In pursuit of the objectives defined in the attached document (Appendix 1) this is a final report of work conducted during the 2022 through the 2024 work seasons. The specific accomplishments for 2022 – 2024 are presented below (<u>underlined</u>) based on the specific project activities stated in Appendix 1:

This project restores trout habitat in the West Branch of the White River to sustain populations by providing shelter, feeding and spawning habitat, reduces bank erosion and removes old structures enabling natural stream flow reconnected to its floodplain.

1. <u>The project is completed.</u>

Project final deliverables include: 1,749 feet of stream restoration and 2,535 feet of improved fisher access by December 31st, 2023.

- 1. <u>Restoration necessary to provide shelter, feeding and spawning habitat, reduces bank</u> erosion and removes old structures enabling natural stream flow reconnected to its floodplain was completed along 3.300 linear feet of stream.
- 2. Improved fisher access was provided for a distance of 10,110 feet
- 3. <u>The project was granted an extension of one year and was completed prior to December</u> <u>31, 2024</u>.

Specific project activities include: 1) Install 6 brush bundle complexes 2) Install 4 log sills 3) Install 1 weir 4) remove or modify 10 old habitat structures 5) Improve fisher access along 2,535 feet of riparian corridor.

- 1. <u>6 brush bundle complexes were installed</u>
- 2. <u>9 log sills were installed</u>
- 3. <u>1 weir was not needed to be installed, since the Trout Habitat Team decided there was</u> no proper site and therefore would not benefit the stream.
- 4. <u>13 old habitat structures were removed or modified</u>
- 5. <u>10,110 feet of fisher access along the riparian corridor was completed</u>

Special Conditions: 1) Send DNR Water Quality staff before and after photos of structures, streambank erosion and brush bundle installation and riparian corridor restoration. Report annual updates on project progress and a final report to the DNR Water Quality and EGS staff by December 31st, 2023.

- 1. <u>Before and after photos were provided in annual reports and pictures for the 2024</u> seasons are included in this final report.
- 2. Annual reports for 2022 and 2023 work seasons were submitted.

- 3. <u>The project was granted an extension of one year and was completed prior to December</u> <u>31, 2024</u>.
- 4. <u>Project updates were delivered at the Annual Central Sand Hills Regional meeting of</u> <u>WDNR and TU Chapters meetings from January 8, 2022 to Dec 9, 2024.</u>
- 5. <u>Trout Stream Reflections column in the Waushara Argus featured the project in issues</u> <u>dated August 3, 2022</u> and December 6, 2023
- 6. <u>Project updates were reported in Wisconsin Trout Spring 2022 and 2023 editions; the</u> <u>final up-date will be submitted to Wisconsin Trout Spring 2025 edition.</u>
- Information boxes were constructed and placed at up and downstream boundaries to the project area on both sides of the river. An information sheets contained project goals and a review of public access regulations pertaining to use of a DNR Easement through private lands.
- 8. <u>Project progress was presented seasonally from 2022 to 2024 on the TU CARES</u> <u>FaceBook page: https://www.facebook.com/centralsandsregionTU</u>

This scope summarizes the project detail provided in the application and does not negate tasks/deliverables described therein. Data, records, and reports, including GIS-based maps, and digital images, must be submitted to the Department in a format specified by the regional Water Quality Biologist.

If consultant is to provide final report, it is recommended that Grantee provide DNR Water Quality Biologist with a draft for comment on report adequacy prior to making final payment to the consultant. DNR to receive both paper and electronic .pdf copies of the final report along with, or prior to submission of grantee's final payment request.

Project expense status:

Reimbursement calculation filed June 28,2024

- Total eligible cost available this period transfer from worksheet: \$7,156.07
- <u>State share of costs: \$5,367.05 (75% of \$7156.07)</u>
- Grantee share of costs: \$1,789.02 (25% of \$7156.07)

Reimbursement amount (Transferred from DNR to FVTU Oct 2024)

- <u>Amount eligible this claim: \$2,938.89 (\$5367.05 \$2428.16)</u>
- Grant balance remaining: \$4,345.57
- Funds forwarded to DNR Trout Habitat Management from FVTU December 2024
 - Amount from State share: \$2,938.89
 - <u>Amount from FVTU, the grantee: \$1,789.02</u>
 - o <u>Total: \$4,727.91</u>

Reimbursement will be filed for final project costs in January 2025

The following report sections are details for each work season, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Report for 2022 Field Season:

• Accomplishments of the 2022 field season – provided by Steve Devitt (DNR Trout Habitat Management Team Wild Rose Wis):

- a. An access road was installed along both the north side and south side of the stream throughout the easement for summer and winter access to work sites. (Refer to pictures)
- Additional access roads and angler access paths were installed on WDNR owned properties both upstream and downstream of the easement on the south side of the stream totaling 8,610 feet of access improvement, further increasing fisher access to the river. (*I can provide a map of these at your request).
- c. A riffle/ford was installed at the lower end of the project area.
- d. New parking lot site was prepped for installation in 2023.
- e. Emerald ash borer killed ash trees were strategically staged throughout the stream corridor for additional log sill installation in 2023.
- f. Consolidation of random rock piles scattered throughout the easement was completed and have been strategically staged to be used in further bankcover modification in 2023.
- g. Herbicide application will be continue into the 2023 season.
- h. More than three of the old structures located at the eastern end of the project site (downstream end) were modified in 2022. (Refer to pictures).

Metrics specific to Following the layout of Appendix 1 "Project Scope and Description of Deliverables (CAOS-2000 Character Limit)"

- i. Under SPECIFIC PROJECT ACTIVITIES INCLUDE Completed to date: (Steve Devitt provided summary of data)
 - i. Completed 3 of the 6 brush bundles
 - ii. Installed 1 of the 4 log sills
 - iii. Have not yet installed the weir
 - iv. Have modified 3 of the 10 old habitat structures
 - v. Completed all 2,535 feet of the angler access along the riparian corridor. Additionally we completed 4,575 feet of angler access to the WDNR property downstream of the Younglove Easement and 1,500 feet of angler access to the WDNR property upstream of the Younglove Easement, for a grand total of 8,610 feet of continuous angler access within the immediate area of the funded project.

Discussion of Project Final Deliverable by Steve Devitt:

While the access is more than complete the stream restoration is more difficult to quantify. The DNR Crew and TU volunteers have worked along all of the 1,749 feet at least once, progress will continue in 2023 to reach completion by working through the entire property multiple times. At this time, an estimate of one third of the instream restoration project is complete.

It is important to note that winter work has been on hold due to the warm temperature so far. Development and application of new methods for trout habitat restoration are requiring more time than originally estimated but create improved durable features for long term benefit.

<u>The DNR Trout Habitat Management Team believes that Oct 15th 2024 is more realistic date for project</u> <u>completion for reasons described above. No additional funding requirement are anticipated to complete</u> <u>the project.</u> Trout Unlimited support summary (Tom Lager):

Typically Trout Unlimited (TU) members from Central Wis, Fox Valley, Hornberg and Shaw-paca TU Chapters participate in stream restoration work on the third Saturday of May through September. On June 18, 2022 specifically, 17 volunteers worked from 8-12:00 providing at least 68 hours of volunteer labor.

These work days are under the direction of Shawn Sullivan and Steve DeVitt (DNR Trout Habitat Management Team Wild Rose Wis).

The project was publicized in several ways to increase public awareness of the restoration work being conducted on the West Branch White River as well as increase general awareness of this cold water resource:

- Project update at the 6th Annual Central Sand Hills Regional meeting of WDNR and TU Chapters January 8, 2022
- Trout Stream Reflections column in the Waushara Argus dated August 3, 2022
- Project update reported in Wisconsin Trout Spring 2022 edition
- Information boxes were constructed and placed at up and downstream boundaries to the project area on both sides of the river. An information sheets contained project goals and a review of public access regulations pertaining to use of a DNR Easement through private lands.
- Project progress was presented October 5, 2022 on the TU CARES FaceBook page: <u>https://www.facebook.com/centralsandsregionTU</u>

A meeting was held January 3, 2023 with DNR (Shawn Sullivan, Steve DeVitt) and TU CARES (John Tucker and Tom Lager) project members to plan the 2023 work seasons. As previously stated above: The DNR Trout Habitat Management Team believes that Oct 15th 2024 is more realistic date for project completion for reasons described above. No additional funding requirement are anticipated to complete the project.

Below is a pictorial summary of the project accomplishments during the 2022 work season. A project overview diagram is displayed in Appendix 2.

Report for 2023 Field Season:

In pursuit of the objectives defined in the attached document (Appendix 1) this is an annual report of work progresses during the 2023 work season.

- Accomplishments of the 2023 field season provided by Steve Devitt (DNR Trout Habitat Management Team Wild Rose Wis):
 - a. 8 log sills and 3 brush bundles were installed during TU workdays June 17th and July 15th, 2023.
 - b. Many of the logs used to complete these structures were staged the previous year.
 - c. 5 old habitat structures were modified old lumber and pilings were removed by hand or with the use of a excavator.
 - d. Access roads installed in 2022 were maintained with the use of the DR mower in 2023.

- e. Stream edge "fishability" brushing was completed throughout easement at least once. The lower half of the project area has been hand brushed numerous times, providing 1,500ft of very fishable water.
- f. Estimated 2/3 of instream restoration is completed.

Following the layout of Appendix 1.... Under SPECIFIC PROJECT ACTIVITIES INCLUDE So far we have...

- 1) Completed 6 of the 6 brush bundles
- 2) Installed 9 of the 4 log sills (+5 from the original plan)
- 3) Have not yet installed the weir
- 4) Have modified 8 of the 10 old habitat structures
- 5) Access is complete throughout the project area.

Discussion of Project Final Deliverable by Steve Devitt:

We plan to complete the following in 2024:

- 1) At least one more riffle
- 2) Modification of 2 more old structures
- 3) Final installation of parking area
- 4) Herbicide treatment
- 5) More log sills and brush bundles

Request for an extension form December 31, 2023 to December 31,2024:

It is important to note that winter work has been on hold due to the warm temperature so far. Development and application of new methods for trout habitat restoration are requiring more time than originally estimated but create improved durable features for long term benefit. The DNR Trout Habitat Management Team believes that Oct 15th 2024 is more realistic date for project completion for reasons described above. No additional funding requirements are anticipated to complete the project.

Trout Unlimited support summary (Tom Lager):

Typically Trout Unlimited (TU) members from Central Wis, Fox Valley, Hornberg and Shaw-paca TU Chapters participate in stream restoration work on the third Saturday of May through September. On June 17 and July 15, 2023 TU chapters worked 8:00 - 12:00 providing many hours of volunteer labor Pictures below are fewer in number this report, since the photographer Tom Lager, had a personal injury (broken ankle while fishing near Belfast) that limited time available to attend work sessions. These work-days are under the direction of Shawn Sullivan and Steve DeVitt (DNR Trout Habitat Management Team Wild Rose Wis).

The project was publicized in several ways to increase public awareness of the restoration work being conducted on the West Branch White River as well as increase general awareness of this cold water resource:

- Project update at the 7th Annual Central Sand Hills Regional meeting of WDNR and TU Chapters January 14, 2023
- Trout Stream Reflections column in the Waushara Argus dated December 6, 2023
- Project update reported in Wisconsin Trout Spring 2023 edition

A meeting was held December 6, 2023 with DNR (Shawn Sullivan, Steve DeVitt) and TU CARES (Al Johnson and Tom Lager) project members to plan the 2024 work seasons. As previously stated above:

The DNR Trout Habitat Management Team believes that December 31, 2024 is more realistic date for project completion for reasons described above. No additional funding is anticipated to complete the project. Reimbursement for expenses of the project are in preparation for filing in early 2024.

Below is a pictorial summary of the project accomplishments during the 2023 work season. A project overview diagram is displayed in Appendix 2.

Report for 2024 Field Season:

In pursuit of the objectives defined in the attached document (Appendix 1) this is an annual report of work progresses during the 2024 work season.

- Accomplishments of the 2024 field season provided by Steve Devitt (DNR Trout Habitat Management Team Wild Rose Wis):
 - a. Since most of the project work to achieve deliverables listed in Appendix 1 were completed in the 2023 field season only the following was left to complete:
 - b. 5 old habitat structures were modified / removed old lumber and pilings were removed by hand or with the use of an excavator – these are key steps to re-connect the stream to its original flood plain.
 - c. 1 weir was not installed, since the Trout Habitat Team decided there was no proper site and therefore would not benefit the stream or enhance trout habitat.
 - d. The 1,500 feet of stream edge "fishability" brushing initially conducted in 2023, reviewed and touched up as needed.
 - e. The total project stream length was evaluated and all restoration was declared complete.

Project costs and reimbursements of project expenditures:

Project expense status:

Reimbursement calculation filed June 28,2024

- Total eligible cost available this period transfer from worksheet: \$7,156.07
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 - o Total: \$4,727.91

The project was publicized in several ways to increase public awareness of the restoration work being conducted on the West Branch White River as well as increase general awareness of this cold water resource:

 Project update at the Annual Central Sand Hills Regional meeting of WDNR and TU Chapters December 9, 2024 • Project update reported in Wisconsin Trout Spring 2024 edition

A meeting was held December 3, 2024 with DNR (Shawn Sullivan, Steve DeVitt and Kyle Siebers) and TU CARES (Al Johnson, Linn Beck and Tom Lager) project members to review the 2024 field season and start steps to finalize the final projects costs for reimbursement filing in January 2025.

This final report was prepared by:

Tom Lager 1700 Spring Hill CT Neenah WI 54956 Fox Valley Trout Unlimited Board of Directors Alan Johnson 6605 N Headwall Circle Appleton WI 54913 Fox Valley Trout Unlimited Treasurer



Fox Valley Trout Unlimited (<u>www.foxvalleytu.org</u>) is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization located in Appleton Wisconsin and is affiliated with the National Trout Unlimited (<u>www.tu.org</u>) and Wisconsin Trout Unlimited (<u>www.wisconsintu.org</u>) organizations. Pres Anthony Pudlo (920-427-3426); Treasurer: Al Johnson (920-450-2013); Secretary: Joe Bach (920-570-2632). Past FVTU President: Graeme Hodson (920-750-9780)





Old stream bank cover to be restored.	Brush bundle placement to accumulated
Dec 2023	sediment and narrow and deepen stream bed
	Dec 2023
Brush bundle placement to accumulated	Log and bush bundle stabilization of stream bank
sediment and narrow and deepen stream bed	and narrowing of stream width to increase
Dec 2023	stream depth Dec 2023



Appendix 1

The below was prepared by David Bolha DNR Sponsor: Fox Valley Trout Unlimited

Project Title: West Branch White River Restoration at Younglove Easement

Project Scope and Description of Deliverables (CAOS-2000 Character Limit): This project restores trout habitat in the West Branch of the White River to sustain populations by providing shelter, feeding and spawning habitat, reduces bank erosion and removes old structures enabling natural stream flow reconnected to its floodplain.

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