

Final Report - Potts Run Streambank Stabilization & Habitat Improvement Project

Project Summary

The original goal of this project was to construct one of three priority streambank stabilization/fish habitat improvement projects that were previously identified in the Potts Run Coldwater Conservation Plan. This would entail stabilizing 500-600 feet of eroding streambank and placing PA Fish & Boat Commission-approved instream fish habitat structures that would further stabilize the stream while also providing critical habitat for fish and other aquatic life in Potts Run, including native brook trout.

Project Outcome

This project is complete and was very successful as it met and exceeded the original project goals. Initially, the project was to complete construction of one streambank stabilization/habitat improvement project located on property controlled by the John M. Chase Legacy Estate, LLC; however, due to the donation of goods and services by two local businesses, Robbins Lumber Company and Russell Stone Products, and the project contractor, Owens Excavating, we were able to expand the project to include streambank stabilization and habitat construction at a second priority site in the watershed owned by Thomas Holencik. This means that 900 feet of streambank stabilization took place instead of the 500 feet that were originally proposed.

Sustainability of Project

Trout Unlimited staff will inspect the project on a yearly basis for the next ten years (as per the terms of the landowner agreement). If problems are detected or structures begin to fail, TU will assess the situation and seek funding to correct it if necessary. These types of projects are designed to become part of the natural stream channel and function for many years with little to no maintenance aside from the above mentioned yearly inspections. Other similar projects that TU completed over a decade ago in the Kettle Creek watershed are still functioning as originally designed, and it is anticipated that the Potts Run projects will be similarly successful.

The next step for Potts Run is to complete the remaining streambank stabilization site, address the No. 3 Mine discharge, and begin implementing other recommendations from the Coldwater Conservation Plan. Trout Unlimited is currently seeking funding to address the final stabilization/habitat site and the AMD discharge, and is working with the township to address some dirt and gravel road issues in the watershed.

Partners

Partners for this project included the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, Robbins Lumber Company, Russell Stone Products, the John M. Chase Legacy Estate, Thomas Holencik, and Owens Excavating. The Foundation for PA Watersheds, Robbins Lumber Company, Russell Stone Products, and Owens Excavating contributed goods and/or services to the project that allowed us to complete two sites instead of one. Thomas Holencik and the Chase Estate are the landowners who graciously allowed us to complete the project on their respective properties.

Accomplishments

This project is a benefit to both the local community and others downstream. Locally, the project stabilized 900 feet of streambank and protected the streamside properties of both the John M. Chase Legacy Estate and Thomas Holencik. Both properties are open to walk-in fishing, so these improvements will benefit local anglers as well. In addition, downstream communities all the way to the Chesapeake Bay will benefit from the project, since it will prevent over 21 tons of sediment, 50 pounds of phosphorus, and 21 lbs of nitrogen from eroding into the stream annually.

In addition, this project also provided an opportunity to reach out to the local community regarding stream health and non-point source pollution prevention. Two public meetings were held regarding this project, at which approximately twenty individuals were educated about sediment pollution and its effects on our local waterways. In addition, the Clearfield Progress newspaper (distribution 8,600 copies) did two articles about the project, the most recent of which was a feature story in the outdoor section (please see attached).